

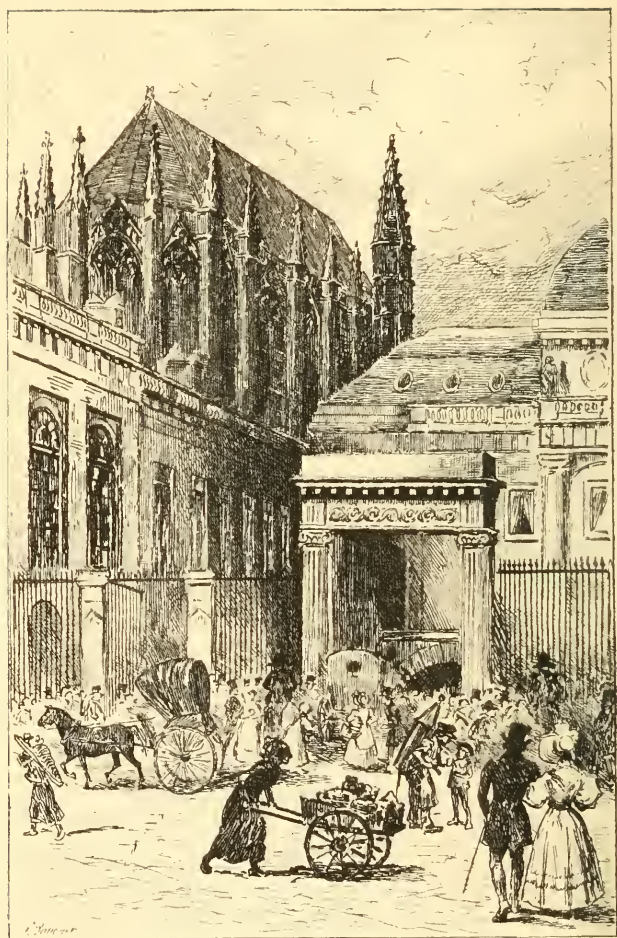
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H. DE BALZAC

THE COMÉDIE HUMAINE





*THE SAINTE-CHAPELLE AND GATEWAY TO THE
PALAIS DE JUSTICE, 1830.*

H. DE BALZAC

THE
HARLOT'S PROGRESS

(SPLENDEURS ET MISÈRES DES COURTISANES)

AND OTHER STORIES

VOL. II.

TRANSLATED BY

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WITH A PREFACE BY

GEORGE SAINTSBURY



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>PREFACE</i>	ix
<i>THE HARLOT'S PROGRESS—</i>	
THE END OF EVIL WAYS (CONCLUDED)	1
VAUTRIN'S LAST AVATAR	15
<i>THE HATED SON—</i>	
HOW THE MOTHER LIVED	169
HOW THE SON DIED	225
<i>A SECOND HOME</i>	277
<i>THE SECRETS OF THE PRINCESS OF CADIGNAN</i>	351

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE SAINTE-CHAPELLE AND GATEWAY TO THE PALAIS DE JUSTICE, 1830	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
	PAGE
“OPEN THE GATE—— THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR SENT ME—— TO SAVE THE DEAD MAN!——”	10
THE CORSICAN AT ONCE KNELT DOWN AND PRETENDED TO BE ABOUT TO CONFESS	83
“ADIEU, MY DEAR FELLOW—— THE LENGTH OF THREE CORPSES PARTS YOU FROM ME”	152
<i>Drawn by W. Boucher.</i>	
THERE SHE STOPPED D'ARTHEZ	380
<i>Drawn by J. Ayton Symington.</i>	

PREFACE.

As has been noted in the Introduction to the first volume of the "Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes," "La dernière Incarnation de Vautrin," though forming, according to the author's conception, an integral part of that work, stands in more ways than one aloof from it. It was much later written than the earlier parts, except "Ou mènent les mauvais Chemins," and it was later written even than that. Moreover, it marks in two different ways a much maturer stage of the author's ideas as to heroic convicts—a stage in which, I think, it is not fanciful to detect a considerable reduction of the gigantesque element and a substitution of something else for it.

We may note this in two ways. In the earlier conception of the matter, as exemplified chiefly in "Ferragus" and "La Père Goriot," the heroic element considerably dominates the practical. In the one Balzac had shown an ex-convict defying society and executing a sort of private justice or injustice, just as he pleased. In the other he had adopted (and had maintained still later in an apologetic epistle to a newspaper editor, which will be found in his works) a notion of the criminal as of a sort of *puissance du mal* pervading and dominating society itself. In the present book, or section of a book, which, it must never be forgotten, was one of his very latest, things are adjusted to a much more actual level. The thieves'-latin which it contains is only an indirect symptom of this. Ainsworth in England and others in France had anticipated him notably in this. But indirectly it shows us that he had come down many stages from his earlier heights. Bourignard and the early Vautrin worked in clouds, afar and apart; they had little to do with actual life: in "La dernière Incarnation de

Vautrin " we find ourselves face to face with the actual, or only slightly "disrealized" realities of convict life. Some of these details may be disgusting, but most of them, as we know from unromantic authorities, are tolerably true; and where truth is, there, with an artist like Balzac, art never fails. It is the drawback of the youthful poet or novelist that he is insufficiently provided with veracity, of the aging novelist or poet that inspiration and the faculty of turning fact into great fiction fail him. But there was no danger of this latter with the author, at nearly twenty years' interval, of "Le dernier Chouan" and "La Cousine Bette." He could only gain by the dispelling of illusion, and he could not lose by the practice of his craft.

Another and still more interesting mark of resipiscence is conveyed in the practical defeat of Vautrin and in his desertion to the side of society itself, which, we are given to understand, he never afterward left, nor less perhaps in the virtual rebuff which Corentin (another *héros du mal* of the older time) receives at the end. The old betrayer of Mlle. de Verneuil is told in so many words that he can be dispensed with; the old enemy of society has to take its wages; the funds of *la haute pègre* are squandered on Lucien de Rubempré, just as any foolish heir might squander them, and the whole scheme of a conspiracy against order breaks down. True, Madame de Maufrigneuse and Madame de Sérizy get their letters; but that is neither here nor there.

The most interesting scene in the book, I suppose, is that in which the scheme of the prison authorities for trapping Vautrin fails by dint of his adroitness, and the command of a strong mind over a weak one, as between him and the other convicts, to whom he had been a fraudulent trustee. It is not free from unsavory details, but the mastery of it quite exceeds its repulsiveness. It is worth noting, too, that Balzac shows how thoroughly he has mastered the principles of his art by intermixing this very success with evidences of Vautrin's hu-

manity, after all. And of minor details there is not, I think, one more interesting in the book, while there are few more interesting in all Balzac, than the fact that in the opening interview between Camusot and his wife the author borrows from "Guy Mannering" the incident of Pleydell's discovering the importance of Dirk Hatteraick's pocket-book by the play of his countenance as his examiner passes from that to other things, and *vice versâ*. The fact is that Balzac was to the very last an ardent devotee of Sir Walter, and that—like all great novelists, I think, without exception, but not like M. Zola and some other persons both abroad and at home—he was perfectly alive to the fact that Scott's workmanship, his analysis, his knowledge of human nature, and his use of it, are about as far from superficiality as the equator is from the pole. In construction and in style Scott was careless, and as it happens, Balzac was in neither respect impeccable. But in other ways the pupil had, and knew that he had, little advantage over the master except in a certain parade of motives and details, as well as (though not to a very great extent) in a greater comprehension of passion, and, of course, to a much greater extent in liberty of exhibiting that comprehension. Let us read Balzac and admire Balzac as much as possible; but when any one talks of Scott as shallow in comparison with Balzac, let us leave the answer to Balzac himself.

(For bibliography, see preceding volume.)

"Les Secrets de la Princesse de Cadignan" is, or rather is part of, one of Balzac's most remarkable fictitious creations—the history of Diane de Maufrigneuse. This lady, who pervades at least a dozen of the stories, shorter and longer, is the subject of dispute between those who say that Balzac's *grandes dames* are rather creatures of the stage and of the inner consciousness than of life, and those who, as the saying is, take them for gospel. The latter do not seem to bring forward any argument except Balzac's greatness and a certain fascination about the personage. The former, beside dwelling on

the obvious touches of exaggeration in the portrait, ask what opportunity Balzac had of really acquainting himself with the ways and manners of the Faubourg Saint-Germain? They admit the competence of the Duchesse de Castries, but point out that he did not know her very long; that he was to all appearance in the position, dangerous for a faithful portrait-painter, of having been taken up and dropped by her; and that she was, so far as is known, his only intimate or much-frequented acquaintance of the kind. It is not necessary to argue this question at length. The piece, however, has the special interest of having been at first dedicated to Theophile Gautier. It was written at Les Jardies, in June, 1839, and first appeared two months afterward in the "*Presse*," under the title of "*La Princesse Parisienne*." This it kept when it appeared next year in volume form, published by Soverain, but forming part of a collection entitled "*Le Foyer de l'Opera*." In both these forms it was divided into eight chapters, with titles in the newspaper, without them in the book. In 1844, when it entered the *Comédie* as a *Scene de la Vie Parisienne*, it lost its old divisions and took its present title.

G. S.



THE HARLOT'S PROGRESS.

PART II.

WHILE pretty women, ministers, and magistrates were conspiring to save Lucien, let us see what he was doing at the Conciergerie. As he passed the gate the poet told the keeper that Monsieur Camusot had granted him leave to write, and he begged to have pens, ink, and paper. At a whispered word to the governor from Camusot's usher a warder was instructed to take them to him at once. During the short time that it took for the warden to fetch these things and carry them up to Lucien, the hapless young man, to whom the idea of facing Jacques Collin had become intolerable, sank into one of those fatal moods in which the idea of suicide—to which he had yielded before now, but without succeeding in carrying it out—rises to the pitch of mania. According to certain alienists, suicide is in some temperaments the closing phase of mental aberration; and since his arrest Lucien had been possessed by that single idea. Esther's letter, read and re-read many times, increased the vehemence of his desire to die by reminding him of the catastrophe of Romeo dying to be with Juliet.

When the materials were brought him, he wrote :

THIS IS MY LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

AT THE CONCIERGERIE, *May 15, 1830.*

I, the undersigned, give and bequeath to the children of my sister, Madame Eve Chardon, wife of David Séchard, formerly a printer at Angoulême, and of Monsieur David Séchard, all the property, real and personal, of which I may be possessed at the time of my decease, due deduction being made for the payments and legacies, which I desire my executor to discharge.

And I earnestly beg Monsieur de Sérizy to undertake the charge of being the executor of this my will.

First: to Monsieur l'Abbé Carlos Herrera I direct the payment of the sum of three hundred thousand francs. Second: to Monsieur le Baron de Nucingen the sum of fourteen hundred thousand francs, less seven hundred and fifty-thousand francs if the sum stolen from Mademoiselle Esther's apartments should be recovered.

As universal legatee to Mademoiselle Esther Gobseck, I give and bequeath the sum of seven hundred and sixty thousand francs to the Board of Asylums of Paris for the foundation of a refuge especially dedicated to the use of public prostitutes who may wish to forsake their career of vice and perdition.

I also bequeath to the Asylums of Paris the sum of money necessary for the purchase of a certificate for dividends to the amount of thirty thousand francs per annum in five per cents, the annual income to be devoted every six months to the release of prisoners for debts not exceeding two thousand francs. The Board of Asylums to select the most respectable of such persons imprisoned for debt.

I beg Monsieur de Sérizy to devote the sum of forty thousand francs to erecting a monument to Mademoiselle Esther in the Eastern cemetery, and I desire to be buried by her side. The monument is to be like the tombs of antiquity—square, our two effigies lying thereon, in white marble, the heads on cushions, the hands folded and raised to heaven. There is to be no inscription whatever.

I beg Monsieur de Sérizy to give to Monsieur Eugène de Rastignac a gold toilet-set that is in my room as a remembrance.

And as a remembrance, I beg my executor to accept my library as a gift from me.

LUCIEN CHARDON DE RUBEMPRÉ.

This will was inclosed in a letter addressed to Monsieur le

Comte de Granville, public prosecutor in the Supreme Court at Paris, as follows :

MONSIEUR LE COMTE :

I place my Will in your hands. When you open this letter I shall be no more. In my desire to be free, I made such cowardly replies to Monsieur Camusot's insidious questions, that, in spite of my innocence, I may find myself entangled in a disgraceful trial. Even if I were acquitted, a blameless life would henceforth be impossible to me in view of the opinions of the world.

I beg you to transmit the inclosed letter to the Abbé Carlos Herrera without opening it, and deliver to Monsieur Camusot the formal retraction I also inclose.

I suppose no one will dare to break the seal of a packet addressed to you. In this belief I bid you adieu, offering you my best respects for the last time, and begging you to believe that in writing you I am giving you a token of my gratitude for all the kindness you have shown to your deceased humble servant.

LUCIEN DE R.

TO THE ABBÉ CARLOS HERRERA.

MY DEAR ABBÉ :—I have had only benefits from you, and I have betrayed you. This involuntary ingratitude is killing me, and when you read these lines I shall have ceased to exist. You are not here now to save me.

You had given me full liberty, if I should find it advantageous, to destroy you by flinging you on the ground like a cigar-end ; but I have sacrificed you by a blunder. To escape from a difficulty, deluded by a clever question from the examining judge, I, your spiritual son by adoption and grace, went over to the side of those who aim at killing you at any cost, and insist on proving an identity, which I know to be impossible, between you and a French villain. All is said.

Between a man of your calibre and me—me of whom you tried to make a greater man than I am capable of being—no foolish sentiment can come at the moment of final parting. You hoped to make me powerful and famous, and you have flung me into the gulf of suicide, that is all. I have long heard the broad pinions of that vertigo beating over my head.

As you have sometimes said, there is the posterity of Cain and the posterity of Abel. In the great human drama Cain is in opposition. You are descended from Adam through that line, in which the devil still fans the fire of which the first spark was flung on Eve. Among the demons of that pedigree, from time to time we see one of stupendous power, summing up every form of human energy, and resembling the rampant beasts of the desert, whose vitality demands the vast spaces in which they are found. Such men are as dangerous as lions would be in the heart of Normandy; they must have their prey, and they devour common men and suck the gold of fools. Their sport is so dangerous that at last they kill the humble dog whom they have taken for a companion and made an idol.

When it is God's will, these mysterious beings may be a Moses, an Attila, Charlemagne, Mahomet, Robespierre, or Napoleon; but when he leaves a generation of these stupendous tools to rust at the bottom of the ocean, they are no more than a Pugatchef, a Fouché, a Louvel, or the Abbé Carlos Herrera. Gifted with immense power over tenderer souls, they attract them and knead them. It is grand, it is fine—in its way. It is the poisonous plant with gorgeous coloring that fascinates children in the woods. It is the poetry of evil. Men like you ought to dwell in caves and never come out of them. You have made me live that vast life, and I have had all my share of existence; so I may very well take my head out of the Gordian knot of your policy and slip it into the running noose of my cravat.

To repair the mischief I have done, I am forwarding to the

public prosecutor a retraction of my deposition. You will know how to take advantage of this document.

In virtue of a will formally drawn up, restitution will be made, Monsieur l'Abbé, of the moneys belonging to your Order which you so imprudently devoted to my use, as a result of your paternal affection for me.

And so, farewell. Farewell, colossal image of Evil and corruption; farewell—to you who, if started on the right road, might have been greater than Ximenes, greater than Richelieu! You have kept your promises. I find myself once more just as I was on the banks of the Charente, after enjoying, by your help, the enchantments of a dream. But, unfortunately, it is not now in the waters of my native place that I shall drown the errors of a boy; but by the Seine, and my pool is a cell in the Conciergerie.

Do not regret me: my contempt for you is as great as my admiration.

LUCIEN.

RECANTATION.

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that I retract, without reservation, all that I deposed at my examination to-day before Monsieur Camusot.

The Abbé Carlos Herrera always called himself my spiritual father, and I was misled by the word father used in another sense by the judge, no doubt under a misapprehension.

I am aware that, for political ends, and to quash certain secrets concerning the cabinets of Spain and of the Tuileries, some obscure diplomatic agents tried to show that the Abbé Carlos Herrera is an escaped convict named Jacques Collin; but the Abbé Carlos Herrera never told me anything about the matter excepting that he was doing his best to obtain evidence of the death or of the continued existence of Jacques Collin.

LUCIEN DE RUBEMPRÉ.

AT THE CONCIERGERIE, *May 15, 1830*

The fever of suicide had given Lucien immense clearness of mind and the swiftness of hand familiar to authors in the fever of composition. The impetus was so strong within him that these four documents were all written within half an hour ; he folded them in a wrapper, fastened with wafers, on which he impressed with the strength of delirium the coat-of-arms engraved on a seal-ring he wore, and he then laid the packet very conspicuously in the middle of the floor.

Certainly it would have been impossible to conduct himself with greater dignity, in the false position to which all this infamy had led him ; he was rescuing his memory from opprobrium, and repairing the injury done to his accomplice, so far as the wit of a man of the world could nullify the results of the poet's trustfulness.

If Lucien had been taken back to one of the lower cells, he would have been wrecked on the impossibility of carrying out his intentions, for those boxes of masonry have no furniture but a sort of camp-bed and a pail for necessary uses. There is not a nail, not a chair, not even a stool. The camp-bed is so firmly fixed that it is impossible to move it without an amount of labor that the warder could not fail to detect, for the iron-barred peephole is always open. Indeed, if a prisoner under suspicion gave reason for uneasiness, he was watched by a gendarme or a constable.

In the private rooms for which prisoners pay, and in that whither Lucien had been conveyed by the judge's courtesy to a young man belonging to the upper ranks of society, the movable bed, table, and chair might serve to carry out his purpose of suicide, though they hardly made it easy. Lucien wore a long, blue silk necktie, and on his way back from his examination he was already meditating on the means by which Pichegru, more or less voluntarily, ended his days. Still, to hang himself, a man must find a purchase, and have a sufficient space between it and the ground for his feet to find no support. Now the window of his room, looking out on the

prison yard, had no handle to the fastening; and the bars, being fixed outside, were divided from his reach by the thickness of the wall, and could not be used for a support.

This, then, was the plan hit upon by Lucien to put himself out of the world. The boarding of the lower part of the opening, which prevented his seeing out into the yard, also hindered the warders outside from seeing what was done in the room; but while the lower portion of the window was replaced by two thick planks, the upper part of both halves still was filled with small panes, held in place by the cross-pieces in which they were set. By standing on his table Lucien could reach the glazed part of the window, and take or break out two panes, so as to have a firm point of attachment in the angle of the lower bar. Round this he would tie his cravat, turn round once to tighten it about his neck after securing it firmly, and kick the table from under his feet.

He drew the table up under the window without making any noise, took off his coat and vest, and got on the table unhesitatingly to break a pane above and one below the iron cross-bar. Standing on the table, he could look out across the yard on a magical view, which he then beheld for the first time. The governor of the prison, in deference to Monsieur Camusot's request that he should deal as leniently as possible with Lucien, had led him, as we have seen, through the back passages of the Conciergerie, entered from the dark vault opposite the Tour d'Argent, thus avoiding the exhibition of a young man of fashion to the crowd of prisoners airing themselves in the yard. It will be for the reader to judge whether the aspect of this promenade was not such as to appeal deeply to a poet's soul.

The yard of the Conciergerie ends at the quay between the Tour d'Argent and the Tour Bonbec; thus the distance between them exactly shows from the outside the width of the plot of ground. The corridor called the Galerie de Saint-Louis, which extends from the Galerie Marchande to the

Court of Appeals and the Bonbec tower, in which, it is said, Saint-Louis' room still exists—may enable the curious to estimate the depth of the yard, as it is of the same length. Thus the solitary-confinement cells and the private rooms are under the *Galerie Marchande*. Queen Marie Antoinette, whose dungeon was under the present cells, was conducted to the presence of the Revolutionary Tribunal, which held its sittings in the place where the Court of Appeals now performs its solemn functions, up a horrible flight of steps, now never used, in the very thickness of the wall on which the *Galerie Marchande* is built.

One side of the prison yard—that on which the Hall of Saint-Louis forms the first floor—displays a long row of Gothic columns, between which the architects of I know not what period have built up two floors of cells to accommodate as many prisoners as possible, by choking the capitals, the arches, and the vaults of this magnificent cloister with plaster, barred loopholes, and partitions. Under the room known as the *Cabinet de Saint-Louis*, in the Bonbec tower, there is a spiral stair leading to these dens. This degradation of one of the immemorial buildings of France is hideous to behold.

At the height at which Lucien was standing he could see this cloister, and the details of the building that joins the two towers, in sharp perspective; before him were the gothic caps of the towers. He stood amazed; his suicide was postponed to his admiration. The phenomena of hallucination are in these days so fully recognized by the medical faculty that this mirage of the senses, this strange illusion of the mind, is beyond dispute. A man under the stress of a feeling which by its intensity has become monomania, often finds himself in the frame of mind to which opium, hashish, or the protoxyde of azote might have brought him. Spectres appear, phantoms and dreams take shape, things of the past live again as once they were. What was but an image of the brain becomes a moving or a living object. Science is now beginning to be-

lieve that under the action of a paroxysm of passion the blood rushes to the brain, and that such congestion has the terrible effects of a dream in a waking state, so averse are we to regard thought as a physical and generative force.

Lucien saw the building in all its pristine beauty; the columns were new, slender, and bright; Saint-Louis' palace rose before him as it had once appeared; he admired its Babylonian proportions and Oriental fancy. He took this exquisite vision as a poetic farewell from civilized creation. While making his arrangements to die, he wondered how this marvel of architecture could exist in Paris so utterly unknown. He was two Luciens—one Lucien the poet, wandering through the Middle Ages under the vaults and the turrets of Saint-Louis, the other Lucien ready for suicide.

Just as Monsieur de Granville had ended giving his instructions to the young secretary, the governor of the Conciergerie came in, and the expression of his face was such as to give the public prosecutor a presentiment of disaster.

"Have you met Monsieur Camusot?" he asked.

"No, monsieur," said the governor; "his clerk Coquart instructed me to give the Abbé Carlos a private room and to liberate Monsieur de Rubempré—but it is too late."

"Good God! what has happened?"

"Here, monsieur, is a letter for you which will explain the catastrophe. The warder on duty in the prison yard heard a noise of breaking glass in the upper room and Monsieur Lucien's next neighbor shrieking wildly, for he heard the poor young man's dying struggles. The warder came to me pale from the sight that met his eyes. He found the prisoner hanged from the window-bar by his necktie."

Though the governor spoke in a low voice, a fearful scream from Madame de Sérizy showed that under stress of feeling our faculties are incalculably keen. The countess heard, or guessed. Before Monsieur de Granville could turn round, or

Monsieur de Bauvan or her husband could stop her, she fled like a flash out of the door, and reached the Galerie Marchande, where she ran on to the stairs leading out to the Rue de la Barillerie.

A barrister was taking off his gown at the door of one of the booths which from time immemorial have choked up this arcade, where shoes are sold, and robes, wigs, and caps kept for hire.

The countess asked the way to the Conciergerie.

"Go down the steps and turn to the left. The entrance is from the Quai de l'Horloge, the first archway."

"That woman is crazy," said the keeper of the booth; "some one ought to follow her."

But no one could have kept up with Léontine; it was not running, she flew.

A physician may explain how it is that these ladies of fashion, whose strength never finds employment, reveal such powers in the critical moments of life.

The countess rushed so swiftly through the archway to the wicket-gate that the gendarme on sentry did not see her pass. She flew at the barred gate like a feather driven by the wind, and shook the iron bars with such fury that she broke the one she grasped. The bent ends were thrust into her breast, making the blood flow, and she dropped on the ground, shrieking: "Open it, open it!" in a tone that horrified the warders.

The turnkeys hurried out.

"Open the gate—the public prosecutor sent me—to save the dead——"

While the countess was going round by the Rue de la Barillerie and the Quai de l'Horloge, Monsieur de Granville and Monsieur de Sérizy went down to the Conciergerie through the inner passages, suspecting Léontine's purpose; but, notwithstanding their haste, they only arrived in time to see her fall fainting at the outer gate, where she was picked

"OPEN THE GATE — THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR SENT
ME — TO SAVE THE DEAD MAN! —"



up by two gendarmes who had come down from the guard-room.

On seeing the governor of the prison, the gate was opened, and the countess was carried into the office, but she stood up and fell on her knees, clasping her hands.

"Only to see him—to see him! Oh! I will do no wrong! But if you do not want to see me die on the spot, let me look at Lucien dead or living. Ah, my friend, are you here? Choose between my death and——" she said to her husband, again sinking down.

"You are kind," she said; "I will always love you——"

"Carry her away," said Monsieur de Bauvan.

"No, we will go to Lucien's cell," said Monsieur de Granville, reading a purpose in Monsieur de Sérizy's wild looks.

And he lifted up the countess, and took her under one arm, while Monsieur de Bauvan supported her on the other side.

"Monsieur," said the Comte de Sérizy to the governor, "silence as of the grave about all this."

"Be easy," replied the governor; "you have done the wisest thing. If this lady——"

"She is my wife."

"Oh! I beg your pardon. Well, she will certainly faint away when she sees the poor man, and while she is unconscious she can be taken home in a carriage."

"That is what I thought," replied the count. "Pray send one of your men to tell my servants in the Cour de Harlay to come round to the gate. Mine is the only carriage there."

"We can save him yet," said the countess, walking on with a degree of strength and spirit that surprised her friends. "There are ways of restoring life——"

And she dragged the gentlemen along, crying to the warder—

"Come on, come faster—one second may cost three lives!"

When the cell-door was opened, and the countess saw

Lucien hanging as though his clothes had been hung on a peg, she made a spring forward as if to embrace him and cling to him; but she fell on her face on the floor with smothered shrieks and a sort of gurgle in her throat.

Five minutes later she was being taken home stretched on the seat in the count's carriage, her husband kneeling by her side. Monsieur de Bauvan went off to fetch a doctor to give her the care she needed.

The governor of the Conciergerie meanwhile was examining the outer gate, and saying to his clerk—

“No expense was spared; the bars are of wrought iron, they were properly tested, and cost a large sum; and yet there was a flaw in that bar.”

Monsieur de Granville on returning to his room had other instructions to give to his private secretary. Massol, happily, had not yet arrived.

Soon after Monsieur de Granville had left, anxious to go to see Monsieur de Sérizy, Massol came and found his ally Chargebœuf in the public prosecutor's Court.

“My dear fellow,” said the young secretary, “if you will do me a great favor, you will put what I shall dictate to you in your ‘Gazette’ to-morrow under the heading of Law Reports; you can compose the heading. Write now.”

And he dictated as follows:

“It has been ascertained that the Demoiselle Esther Gobsack killed herself of her own free will.

“Monsieur Lucien de Rubempré satisfactorily proved an alibi, and his innocence leaves his arrest to be regretted, all the more because just as the examining judge had given the order for his release the young gentleman died suddenly.”

“I need not point out to you,” said the young lawyer to Massol, “how necessary it is to preserve absolute silence as to the little service requested of you; your future depends upon it, monsieur.”

"Since it is you who do me the honor of so much confidence," replied Massol, "allow me to make one observation. This paragraph will give rise to odious comments on the course of justice——"

"Justice is strong enough to bear them," said the young attaché to the Courts, with the pride of a coming magistrate trained by Monsieur de Granville.

"Permit me, Monsieur le Comte! With two sentences this difficulty may be avoided."

And the journalist-lawyer wrote as follows:

"The forms of the law have nothing to do with this sad event. The *post-mortem* examination, which was at once made, proved that sudden death was due to the rupture of an aneurism in its last stage. If Monsieur Lucien de Rubempré had been upset by his arrest, death must have ensued sooner. But we are in a position to state that, far from being distressed at being taken into custody, the young man, whom all must lament, only laughed at it, and told those who escorted him from Fontainebleau to Paris that as soon as he was brought before a magistrate and explained himself his innocence would be at once apparent."

"That saves it, I think?" said Massol.

"You are perfectly right."

"The public prosecutor will thank you for it to-morrow," said Massol silyly.

Thus may we see how the startling events of life are dished up in the "local" column of the more or less veracious daily newspapers.

Now to the great majority, as to the more choice reader, it will seem perhaps that this Study is not completed by the death of Esther and of Lucien; Jacques Collin and Asia, Europe and Paccard, in spite of their villainous lives, may

have been interesting enough to make their fate a matter of curiosity.

The last act of the drama will also complete the picture of life which this Study is intended to present, and give the issue of various interests which Lucien's career had strangely tangled by bringing some ignoble personages from the hulks into contact with those of the highest rank.



VAUTRIN'S LAST AVATAR.

"What is it, Madeleine?" asked Madame Camusot, seeing her maid come into the room with the particular air that servants assume in critical moments.

"Madame," said Madeleine, "monsieur has just come in from Court; but he looks so upset, and is in such a state, that I think perhaps it would be well for you to go to his room."

"Did he say anything?" asked Madame Camusot.

"No, madame; but we never have seen monsieur look like that; he looks as if he were going to be ill, his face is yellow—he seems all to pieces——"

Madame Camusot waited for no more; she rushed out of her room and flew to her husband's study. She found the lawyer sitting in an armchair, pale and dazed, his legs stretched out, his head against the back of it, his hands hanging limp, exactly as if he were sinking into idiocy.

"What is the matter, my dear?" said the young woman in alarm.

"Oh! my poor Amélie, the most dreadful thing has happened—I am still trembling. Imagine, the public prosecutor—no, Madame de Sérizy—that is—I do not know where to begin."

"Begin at the end," said Madame Camusot.

"Well, just as Monsieur Popinot, in the council-room of the first Court, had put the last signature to the ruling of 'insufficient cause' for the apprehension of Lucien de Rubempré, on the ground of my report, setting him at liberty—in fact, the whole thing was done, the clerk was going off with the minute book, and I was quit of the whole business—the president of the Court came in and took up the papers. 'You are releasing a dead man,' said he, with chilling irony;

‘the young man is gone, as Monsieur de Bonald says, to appear before his natural Judge. He died of apoplexy——’

“I breathed again, thinking it was caused by some sudden illness.

“‘As I understand you, Monsieur le Président,’ said Monsieur Popinot, ‘it is a case of apoplexy like Pichegru’s.’

“‘Gentlemen,’ said the president then, very gravely, ‘you must please to understand that for the outside world Lucien de Rubempré died of an aneurism.’

“We all looked at each other. ‘Very great people are concerned in this deplorable business,’ said the president. ‘God grant, for your sake, Monsieur Camusot, though you did no less than your duty, that Madame de Sérizy may not go mad from the shock she has had. She was carried away almost dead. I have just met our public prosecutor in a painful state of despair. You have made a mess of it, my dear Camusot,’ he added in my ear. I assure you, my dear, as I came away I could hardly stand. My legs shook so that I dared not venture into the street. I went back to my room to rest. Then Coquart, who was putting away the papers of this wretched case, told me that a very handsome woman had taken the Conciergerie by storm, wanting to save Lucien, whom she was quite crazy about, and that she fainted away on seeing him hanging by his cravat to the window-bar of his room. The idea that the way in which I questioned that unhappy young fellow—who, between ourselves, was guilty in many ways—can have led to his committing suicide has haunted me ever since I left the Palais, and I feel constantly on the point of fainting——”

“What next? Are you going to think yourself a murderer because a suspected criminal hangs himself in prison just as you were about to release him?” cried Madame Camusot. “Why, an examining judge in such a case is like a general whose horse is killed under him! That is all.”

“Such a comparison, my dear, is at best but a jest, and

jesting is out of place now. In this case the dead man clutches the living. All our hopes are buried in Lucien's coffin."

"Indeed?" said Madame Camusot, with deep irony.

"Yes, my career is closed. I shall be no more than an examining judge all my life. Before this fatal termination Monsieur de Granville was annoyed at the turn the preliminaries had taken; his speech to our president makes me quite certain that so long as Monsieur de Granville is public prosecutor I shall get no promotion."

Promotion! The terrible thought, which in these days makes a judge a mere functionary.

Formerly a magistrate was made at once what he was to remain. The three or four presidents' caps satisfied the ambitions of lawyers in each Parlement. An appointment as counselor was enough for a de Brosses or a Molé, at Dijon as much as in Paris. This office, in itself a fortune, required a fortune brought to it to keep it up.

In Paris, outside the Parlement, men of the long robe could hope only for three supreme appointments: those of comptroller-general, keeper of the seals, or chancellor. Below the Parlements, in the lower grades, the president of a lower Court thought himself quite of sufficient importance to be content to fill his chair to the end of his days.

Compare the position of a counselor in the High Court of Justice in Paris, in 1829, who has nothing but his salary, with that of a counselor to the Parlement in 1729. How great is the difference! In these days, when money is the universal social guarantee, magistrates are not required to have—as they used to have—fine private fortunes: hence we see deputies and peers of France heaping office on office, at once magistrates and legislators, borrowing dignity from other positions than those which ought to give them all their importance.

In short, a magistrate tries to distinguish himself for promotion as men do in the army, in a Government office, or in the other services.

This prevailing thought, even if it does not affect his independence, is so well known and so natural, and its effects are so evident, that the law inevitably loses some of its majesty in the eyes of the public. And, in fact, the salaries paid by the State make priests and magistrates mere employes. Steps to be gained foster ambition, ambition engenders subservience to power, and modern equality places the judge and the person to be judged in the same category at the bar of society. And so the two pillars of social order, Religion and Justice, are lowered in this nineteenth century, which asserts itself as progressive in all things.

"And why should you never be promoted?" said Amélie Camusot.

She looked half-jestingly at her husband, feeling the necessity of reviving the energies of the man who embodied her ambitions, and on whom she could play as on an instrument.

"Why despair?" she went on, with a shrug that sufficiently expressed her indifference as to the prisoner's end. "This suicide will delight Lucien's two enemies, Madame d'Espard and her cousin, the Comtesse du Châtelet. Madame d'Espard is on the best terms with the keeper of the seals; through her you can get an audience of his excellency and tell him all the secrets of this business. Then, if the head of the law is on your side, what have you to fear from the president of your Court or the public prosecutor?"

"But Monsieur and Madame de Sérizy?" cried the poor man. "Madame de Sérizy is gone mad, I tell you, and her madness is my doing, they say."

"Well, if she is out of her mind, oh, judge devoid of judgment," said Madame Camusot, laughing, "she can do you no harm. Come, tell me all the incidents of the day."

"Bless me!" said Camusot, "just as I had cross-questioned the unhappy youth, and he had deposed that the self-styled Spanish priest is really Jacques Collin, the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse and Madame de Sérizy sent me a note by a

servant begging me not to examine him. It was all over ! There——”

“But you must have lost your head !” said Amélie. “What was to prevent you, being so sure as you are of your clerk’s fidelity, from calling Lucien back, reassuring him cleverly, and revising the examination ?”

“Why, you are as bad as Madame de Sérizy ; you laugh justice to scorn,” said Camusot, who was incapable of flouting his profession. “Madame de Sérizy seized the minutes and threw them into the fire.”

“That is the right sort of woman ! Bravo !” cried Madame Camusot.

“Madame de Sérizy declared she would sooner see the Palais blown up than leave a young man who had enjoyed the favors of the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse and her own to stand at the bar of a Criminal Court by the side of a convict !”

“But, Camusot,” said Amélie, unable to suppress a superior smile, “your position is splendid——”

“Ah ! yes, splendid !”

“You did your duty.”

“But all wrong ; and in spite of the jesuitical advice of Monsieur de Granville, who met me on the Quai Malaquais.”

“This morning ?”

“This morning.”

“At what hour ?”

“At nine o’clock.”

“Oh, Camusot !” cried Amélie, clasping and wringing her hands, “and I am always imploring you to be constantly on the alert. Good heavens ! it is not a man, but a barrow-load of stones that I have to drag on ! Why, Camusot, your public prosecutor was waiting for you. He must have given you some warning.”

“Yes, indeed——”

“And you failed to understand him ! If you are so deaf, you will indeed be an examining judge all your life without

any knowledge whatever of the question. At any rate, have sense enough to listen to me," she went on, silencing her husband, who was about to speak. "You think the matter is done for?" she asked.

Camusot looked at his wife as a country bumpkin looks at a conjurer.

"If the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse and Madame de Sérizy are compromised, you will find them both ready to patronize you," said Amélie. "Madame de Sérizy will get you admission to the keeper of the seals, and you will tell him the secret history of the affair; then he will amuse the King with the story, for sovereigns always wish to see the wrong side of the tapestry and to know the real meaning of the events the public stare at open-mouthed. Henceforth there will be no cause to fear either the public prosecutor or Monsieur de Sérizy."

"What a treasure such a wife is!" cried the lawyer, plucking up courage. "After all, I have unearthed Jacques Collin; I shall send him to his account at the Assize Court and unmask his crimes. Such a trial is a triumph in the career of an examining judge!"

"Camusot," Amélie began, pleased to see her husband rally from the moral and physical prostration into which he had been thrown by Lucien's suicide, "the president told you that you had blundered to the wrong side. Now you are blundering as much to the other—you are losing your way again, my dear."

The judge stood up, looking at his wife with a stupid stare.

"The King and the keeper of the seals will be glad, no doubt, to know the truth of this business, and at the same time much annoyed at seeing the lawyers on the Liberal side dragging important persons to the bar of opinion and of the Assize Court by their special pleading—such people as the Maufrigneuses, the Sérizys, and the Grandlieus—in short, all who are directly or indirectly mixed up with this case."

"They are all in it; I have them all!" cried Camusot.

And Camusot walked up and down the room like Saganarelle on the stage when he is trying to get out of a scrape.

"Listen, Amélie," said he, standing in front of his wife. "An incident recurs to my mind, a trifle in itself, but, in my position, of vital importance.

"Realize, my dear, that this Jacques Collin is a giant of cunning, of dissimulation, of deceit. He is—what shall I say?—the Cromwell of the hulks! I never met such a scoundrel; he almost took me in. But in examining a criminal, a little end of thread leads you to find a ball, is a clue to the investigation of the darkest consciences and obscurest facts. When Jacques Collin saw me turning over the letters seized in Lucien de Rubempré's lodgings, the villain glanced at them with the evident intention of seeing whether some particular packet were among them, and he allowed himself to give a visible expression of satisfaction. This look, as of a thief valuing his booty, this movement, as of a man in danger of saying to himself: 'My weapons are safe,' betrayed a world of things.

"Only you women, beside us and our examinees, can in a single flash epitomize a whole scene, revealing trickery as complicated as safety-locks. Volumes of suspicion may thus be communicated in a second. It is terrifying—life or death lies in a wink.

"Said I to myself: 'The rascal has more letters in his hands than these!' Then the other details of the case filled my mind; I overlooked the incident, for I thought I should have my men face to face, and clear up this point afterward. But it may be considered as quite certain that Jacques Collin, after the fashion of such wretches, has hidden in some safe place the most compromising of the young fellow's letters, adored as he was by——"

"And yet you are afraid, Camusot? Why, you will be president of the Supreme Court much sooner than I expected!" cried Madame Camusot, her face beaming. "Now,

then, you must proceed so as to give satisfaction to everybody, for the matter is looking so serious that it might quite possibly be snatched from us. Did they not take the proceedings out of Popinot's hands to place them in yours when Madame d'Espard tried to get a Commission in Lunacy to incapacitate her husband?" she added, in reply to her husband's gesture of astonishment. "Well, then, might not the public prosecutor, who takes such keen interest in the honor of Monsieur and Madame de Sérizy, carry the case to the Upper Court and get a councilor in his interest to open a fresh inquiry?"

"Bless me, my dear, where did you study criminal law?" cried Camusot. "You know everything; you can give me points."

"Why, do you believe that, by to-morrow morning, Monsieur de Granville will not have taken fright at the possible line of defense that might be adopted by some liberal advocate whom Jacques Collin would manage to secure; for lawyers will be ready to pay him to place the case in their hands! And those ladies know their danger quite as well as you do—not to say better; they will put themselves under the protection of the public prosecutor, who already sees their families unpleasantly close to the prisoner's bench, as a consequence of the coalition between this convict and Lucien de Rubempré, betrothed to Mademoiselle de Grandlieu—Lucien, Esther's lover, Madame de Maufrigneuse's former lover, Madame de Sérizy's darling. So you must conduct the affair in such a way as to conciliate the favor of your public prosecutor, the gratitude of Monsieur de Sérizy, and that of the Marquise d'Espard and the Comtesse du Châtelet, to reinforce Madame de Maufrigneuse's influence by that of the Grandlieus, and to gain the complimentary approval of your president.

"I will undertake to deal with the ladies—d'Espard, de Maufrigneuse, and de Grandlieu.

"You must go to-morrow morning to see the public prosecutor. Monsieur de Granville is a man who does not live

with his wife ; for ten years he had for his mistress a Made-moiselle de Bellefeuille, who bore him illegitimate children—didn't she? Well, such a magistrate is no saint ; he is a man like any other ; he can be won over ; he must give you a hold somewhere ; you must discover the weak spot and flatter him ; ask his advice, point out the dangers attending the case ; in short, try to get him into the same boat, and you will be——”

“I ought to kiss your footprints !” exclaimed Camusot, interrupting his wife, putting his arm round her, and pressing her to his heart. “Amélie, you have saved me !”

“I brought you in tow from Alençon to Mantes, and from Mantes to the Metropolitan Court,” replied Amélie. “Well, well, be quite easy ! I intend to be called Madame la Présidente within five years’ time. But, my dear, pray always think over everything a long time before you come to any determination. A judge’s business is not that of a fireman ; your papers are never in a blaze, you have plenty of time to think ; so in your place blunders are inexcusable.”

“The whole strength of my position lies in identifying the sham Spanish priest with Jacques Collin,” the judge said, after a long pause. “When once that identity is established, even if the bench should take the credit of the whole affair, that will still be an ascertained fact which no magistrate, judge, or councilor can get rid of. I shall do like the boys who tie a tin kettle to a cat’s tail ; the inquiry, whoever carries it on, will make Jacques Collin’s tin kettle clank.”

“Bravo !” said Amélie.

“And the public prosecutor would rather come to an understanding with me than with any one else, since I am the only man who can remove the Damocles’ sword that hangs over the heart of the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

“Only, you have no idea how hard it will be to achieve that magnificent result. Just now, when I was with Monsieur de Granville in his private office, we agreed, he and I, to take Jacques Collin at his own valuation—a canon of the chapter

of Toledo, Carlos Herrera. We consented to recognize his position as a diplomatic envoy, and allow him to be claimed by the Spanish embassy. It was in consequence of this plan that I made out the papers by which Lucien de Rubempré was released, and revised the minutes of the examinations, washing the prisoners as white as snow.

"To-morrow, Rastignac, Bianchon, and some others are to be confronted with the self-styled canon of Toledo; they will not recognize him as Jacques Collin who was arrested in their presence ten years since in a cheap boarding-house, where they knew him under the name of Vautrin."

There was a short silence, while Madame Camusot sat thinking.

"Are you sure your man is Jacques Collin?" she asked.

"Positive," said the lawyer, "and so is the public prosecutor."

"Well, then, try to make some exposure at the Palais de Justice without showing your claws too much under your furred cat's paws. If your man is still in the secret cells, go straight to the governor of the Conciergerie and contrive to have the convict publicly identified. Instead of behaving like a child, act like the ministers of police under despotic governments, who invent conspiracies against the monarch to have the credit of discovering them and making themselves indispensable. Put three families in danger to have the glory of rescuing them."

"That luckily reminds me!" cried Camusot. "My brain is so bewildered that I had quite forgotten an important point. The instructions to place Jacques Collin in a private room were taken by Coquart to Monsieur Gault, the governor of the prison. Now, Bibi-Lupin, Jacques Collin's great enemy, has taken steps to have three criminals, who know the man, transferred from La Force to the Conciergerie; if he appears in the prison yard to-morrow, a terrific scene is expected——"

"Why?"

“Jacques Collin, my dear, was treasurer of the money owned by the prisoners in the hulks, amounting to considerable sums; now he is supposed to have spent it all to maintain the deceased Lucien in luxury, and he will be called to account. There will be such a battle, Bibi-Lupin tells me, as will require the intervention of the warders, and the secret will be out. Jacques Collin's life is in danger.

“Now, if I get to the Palais early enough I may record the evidence of identity.”

“Oh, if only his creditors should take him off your hands! You would be thought such a clever fellow! Do not go to Monsieur de Granville's room; wait for him in his Court with that formidable great gun. It is a loaded cannon turned on the three most important families of the Court and peerage. Be bold: propose to Monsieur de Granville that he should relieve you of Jacques Collin by transferring him to La Force, where the convicts know how to deal with those who betray them.

“I will go to the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, who will take me to the Grandlieus. Possibly I may see Monsieur de Sérizy. Trust me to sound the alarm everywhere. Above all, send me a word we will agree upon to let me know if the Spanish priest is officially recognized as Jacques Collin. Get your business at the Palais over by two o'clock, and I will have arranged for you to have an interview with the keeper of the seals; perhaps I may find him with the Marquise d'Espard.”

Camusot stood squarely with a look of admiration that made his knowing wife smile.

“Now, come to dinner and be cheerful,” said she in conclusion. “Why, you see! We have been only two years in Paris, and here you are on the high road to be made councillor before the end of the year. From that to the presidency of a court, my dear, there is no gulf but what some political service may bridge.”

This conjugal sitting shows how greatly the deeds and the

lightest words of Jacques Collin, the lowest personage in this drama, involved the honor of the families among whom he had planted his now dead protege.

At the Conciergerie Lucien's death and Madame de Sérizy's incursion had produced such a block in the wheels of the machinery that the governor had forgotten to remove the sham priest from his dungeon-cell.

Though more than one instance is on record of the death of a prisoner during his preliminary examination, it was a sufficiently rare event to disturb the warders, the clerk, and the governor, and hinder their working with their usual serenity. At the same time, to them the important fact was not the handsome young fellow so suddenly become a corpse, but the breakage of the wrought-iron bar of the outer prison gate by the frail hands of a fine lady. And indeed, as soon as the public prosecutor and Comte Octave de Bauvan had gone off with Monsieur de Sérizy and his unconscious wife, the governor, clerk, and turnkeys gathered round the gate after letting out Monsieur Lebrun, the prison doctor, who had been called in to certify to Lucien's death, in concert with the "death doctor" of the district in which the unfortunate youth had been lodging.

In Paris, the "death doctor" is the medical officer whose duty it is in each district to register deaths and certify to their causes.

With the rapid insight for which he was known, Monsieur de Granville had judged it necessary, for the honor of the families concerned, to have the certificate of Lucien's deposited at the mairie of the district in which the Quai Malaquais lies, as the deceased had resided there, and to have the body carried from his lodgings to the church of Saint-Germain des Prés, where the service was to be held. Monsieur de Chargeboeuf, Monsieur de Granville's private secretary, had orders to this effect. The body was to be transferred from

the prison during the night. The secretary was desired to go at once and settle matters at the mairie with the parish authorities and with the official undertakers. Thus, to the world in general, Lucien would have died at liberty in his own lodgings, the funeral would start from thence, and his friends would be invited there for the ceremony.

So, when Camusot, his mind at ease, was sitting down to dinner with his ambitious better-half, the governor of the Conciergerie and Monsieur Lebrun, the prison doctor, were standing outside the gate bewailing the fragility of iron bars and the strength of ladies in love.

"No one knows," said the doctor to Monsieur Gault, "what an amount of nervous force there is in a man wound up to the highest pitch of passion. Dynamics and mathematics have no formulas or symbols to express that power. Why, only yesterday, I witnessed an experiment which gave me a shudder, and which accounts for the terrible physical strength put forth just now by that little woman."

"Tell me about it," said Monsieur Gault, "for I am so foolish as to take an interest in magnetism; I do not believe in it, but it mystifies me."

"A physician who magnetizes—for there are men among us who believe in magnetism," Lebrun went on, "offered to experiment on me in proof of a phenomenon that he described and I doubted. Curious to see with my own eyes one of the strange states of nervous tension by which the existence of magnetism is demonstrated, I consented.

"These are the facts. I should very much like to know what our College of Medicine would say if each of its members in turn were subjected to this influence, which leaves no loophole for incredulity.

"My old friend—this doctor," said Maître Lebrun parenthetically, "is an old man persecuted for his opinions since Mesmer's time by all the faculty; he is seventy or seventy-two years of age, and his name is Bouvard. At the present day

he is the patriarchal representative of the theory of animal magnetism. This good man regards me as a son ; I owe my training to him. Well, this worthy old Bouvard* it was who proposed to prove to me that nerve-force put in motion by the magnetizer was, not indeed infinite, for man is under immutable laws, but a power acting like other powers of nature whose elemental essence escapes our observation.

“ ‘ For instance,’ said he, ‘ if you place your hand in that of a somnambulist who, when awake, can press it only up to a certain average of tightness, you will see that in the somnambulistic state—as it is stupidly termed—his fingers can clutch like a vise screwed up by a blacksmith.’ Well, monsieur, I placed my hand in that of a woman, not asleep, for Bouvard rejects the word, but isolated, and when the old man bid her squeeze my wrist as long and as tightly as she could, I begged him to stop when the blood was almost bursting from my finger-tips. Look, you can see the mark of her clutch, which I shall not lose for these three months.”

“ ‘ The deuce ! ’ exclaimed Monsieur Gault, as he saw a band of bruised flesh, looking like a scar or a burn.

“ ‘ My dear Gault,’ the doctor went on, “ if my wrist had been gripped in an iron manacle screwed tight by a locksmith, I should not have felt the bracelet of metal so hard as that woman’s fingers ; her hand was of unyielding steel, and I am convinced that she could have crushed my bones and broken my hand from the wrist. The pressure, beginning almost insensibly, increased without relaxing, fresh force being constantly added to the former grip ; a tourniquet could not have been more effectual than that hand used as an instrument of torture. To me, therefore, it seems proven that under the influence of passion, which is the will concentrated on one point and raised to an incalculable power of animal force, as the different varieties of electric force are also, man may direct his whole vitality, whether for attack or resistance, to one of

* See “ Ursule Mirouët.”

his organs. Now, this little lady, under the stress of her despair, had concentrated her vital force in her hands."

"She must have a good deal, too, to break a wrought-iron bar," said the chief warder, with a shake of the head.

"There was a flaw in it," Monsieur Gault observed.

"For my part," said the doctor, "I dare assign no limits to nervous force. And, indeed, it is by this that mothers, to save their children, can magnetize lions, climb, in a fire, along a parapet where a cat would not venture, and endure the torments that sometimes attend childbirth. In this lies the secret of the attempts made by convicts and prisoners to regain their liberty. The extent of our vital energies is as yet unknown; they are part of the energy of nature itself, and we draw them from unknown reservoirs."

"Monsieur," said a warder in an undertone to the governor, coming close to him as he was escorting Doctor Lebrun as far as the outer gates of the Conciergerie, "Number 2 in the secret cells says he is ill, and needs the doctor; he declares he is dying," added the turnkey.

"Indeed," said the governor.

"His breath rattles in his throat," replied the man.

"It is five o'clock," said the doctor; "I have had no dinner. But, after all, here I am at hand. Come, let us see."

"Number 2, as it happens, is the Spanish priest suspected of being Jacques Collin," said Monsieur Gault to the doctor, "and one of the persons suspected of the crime in which that poor young man was implicated."

"I saw him this morning," replied the doctor. "Monsieur Camusot sent for me to give evidence as to the state of the rascal's health, and I can assure you that he is perfectly well, and could make a fortune by playing the part of Hercules in a troupe of athletes."

"Perhaps he wants to kill himself too," said Monsieur Gault. "Let us both go down to the cells together, for I

ought to go there if only to transfer him to an upper room. Monsieur Camusot has given orders to mitigate this anonymous gentleman's confinement."

Jacques Collin, known as Trompe-la-Mort in the world of the hulks, who must henceforth be called only by his real name, had gone through terrible distress of mind since, after hearing Camusot's order, he had been taken back to the underground cell—an anguish such as he had never before known in the course of a life diversified by many crimes, by three escapes, and two sentences at the Assizes. And is there not something monstrously fine in the dog-like attachment shown to the man he had made his friend by this wretch in whom were concentrated all the life, the powers, the spirit, and the passions of the hulks, who was, so to speak, their highest expression?

Wicked, infamous, and in so many ways horrible, this absolute worship of his idol makes him so truly interesting that this Study, long as it is already, would seem incomplete and cut short if the close of this criminal career did not come as a sequel to Lucien du Rubempré's end. The little spaniel being dead, we want to know whether his terrible playfellow the lion will live on.

In real life, in society, every event is so inevitably linked to other events, that one cannot occur without the rest. The water of the great river forms a sort of fluid floor; not a wave, however rebellious, however high it may toss itself, but its powerful crest must sink to the level of the mass of waters, stronger by the momentum of its course than the revolt of the surges it bears with it.

And just as you watch the current flow, seeing in it a confused sheet of images, so perhaps you would like to measure the pressure exerted by social energy on the vortex called Vautrin; to see how far away the rebellious eddy will be carried ere it is lost, and what the end will be of this really diabolical man, human still by the power of loving—so hardly

can that heavenly grace perish, even in the most cankered heart.

This wretched convict, embodying the poem that has smiled on many a poet's fancy—on Moore, on Lord Byron, on Mathurin, on Canalis—the demon who has drawn an angel down to hell to refresh him with dews stolen from heaven—this Jacques Collin will be seen, by the reader who has understood that iron soul, to have sacrificed his own life for seven years past. His vast powers, absorbed in Lucien, acted solely for Lucien; he lived in his progress, his loves, his ambitions. To him Lucien was his own soul made visible.

It was Trompe-la-Mort who dined with the Grandlieus, stole into ladies' boudoirs, and loved Esther by proxy. In fact, in Lucien he saw Jacques Collin, young, handsome, noble, and rising to the dignity of an ambassador.

Trompe-la-Mort had realized the German superstition of a *doppelgänger* by means of a spiritual paternity, a phenomenon which will be quite intelligible to those women who have ever truly loved, who have felt their soul merge in that of the man they adore, who have lived his life, whether noble or infamous, happy or unhappy, obscure or brilliant; who, in defiance of distance, have felt a pain in their leg if he were wounded in his; who if he fought a duel have been aware of it; and who, to put the matter in a nutshell, did not need to be told he was unfaithful to know it.

As he went back to his cell, Jacques Collin said to himself: "The boy is being examined."

And he shivered—he who thought no more of killing a man than a laborer does of drinking.

"Has he been able to see his mistresses?" he wondered. "Has my aunt succeeded in catching those damned females? Have these duchesses and countesses bestirred themselves and prevented his being examined? Has Lucien had my instructions? And if ill-luck will have it that he is cross-questioned, how will he carry it off? Poor boy, and I have brought him

to this ! It is that rascal Paccard and that sneak Europe who have caused all this rumpus by collaring the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs for the certificate Nucingen gave Esther. That precious pair tripped us up at the last step ; but I will make them pay dear for their pranks.

“One day more and Lucien would have been a rich man ; he might have married his Clotilde de Grandlieu. Then the boy would have been all my own ! And to think that our fate depends on a look, on a blush of Lucien’s under Camusot’s eye, who sees everything and has all a judge’s wits about him ! For when he showed me the letters we tipped each other a wink in which we took each other’s measure, and he guessed that I can make Lucien’s lady-loves fork out.”

This soliloquy lasted for three hours. His torments were so great that they were too much for that frame of iron and vitriol ; Jacques Collin, whose brain felt on fire with insanity, suffered such fearful thirst that he unconsciously drank up all the water contained in one of the pails with which the cell was supplied, forming, with the bed, all its furniture.

“If he loses his head, what will become of him?—for the poor child has not Théodore’s tenacity,” said he to himself, as he lay down on the camp-bed—like a bed in a guard-room.

A word must here be said about this Théodore, remembered by Jacques Collin at such a critical moment. Théodore Calvi, a young Corsican, imprisoned for life at the age of eighteen for eleven murders, thanks to influential interference paid for with vast sums, had been made the fellow-convict of Jacques Collin, to whom he was chained, in 1819 and 1820. Jacques Collin’s last escape, one of his finest inventions—for he had got out disguised as a gendarme leading Théodore Calvi as he was, a convict called before the commissary of police—had been effected in the seaport of Rochefort, where the convicts die by dozens, and where, it was hoped, that these two dangerous rascals would have ended their days.

Though they escaped together, the difficulties of their flight had forced them to separate. Théodore was caught and restored to the hulks.

After getting to Spain and metamorphosing himself into Don Carlos Herrera, Jacques Collin was on his way to look for his Corsican at Rochefort, when he met Lucien on the banks of the Charente. The hero of the banditti of the Corsican scrub, to whom Trompe-la-Mort owed his knowledge of Italian, was of course sacrificed to the new idol.

Indeed, a life with Lucien, a youth innocent of all crime, who had only minor sins on his conscience, dawned on him as bright and glorious as a summer sun ; while with Théodore, Jacques Collin could look forward to no end but the scaffold after a career of indispensable crimes.

The thought of disaster as a result of Lucien's weakness—for his experience of an underground cell would certainly have turned his brain—took vast proportions in Jacques Collin's mind ; and, contemplating the probabilities of such a misfortune, the unhappy man felt his eyes fill with tears, a phenomenon that had been utterly unknown to him since his earliest childhood.

"I must be in a furious fever," said he to himself ; "and perhaps if I send for the doctor and offer him a handsome sum, he will put me in communication with Lucien."

At this moment the turnkey brought in his dinner.

"It is quite useless, my boy ; I cannot eat. Tell the governor of this prison to send the doctor to see me. I am very bad, and I believe my last hour has come."

Hearing the guttural rattle that accompanied these words, the warder bowed and went. Jacques Collin clung wildly to this hope ; but when he saw the doctor and the governor come in together, he perceived that the attempt was abortive, and coolly awaited the upshot of the visit, holding out his wrist for the doctor to feel his pulse.

"The abbé is feverish," said the doctor to Monsieur Gault,

"but it is the type of fever we always find in inculpated prisoners—and to me," he added, in the governor's ear, "it is always a sign of some degree of guilt."

Just then the governor, to whom the public prosecutor had intrusted Lucien's letter to be given to Jacques Collin, left the doctor and the prisoner together under the guard of the warder, and went to fetch the letter.

"Monsieur," said Jacques Collin, seeing the warder outside the door, and not understanding why the governor had left them, "I should think nothing of thirty thousand francs if I might send five lines to Lucien de Rubempré."

"I will not rob you of your money," said Doctor Lebrun; "no one in this world can ever communicate with him again——"

"No one?" said the prisoner in undisguised amazement. "And why?"

"He has hanged himself——"

No tigress robbed of her whelps ever startled an Indian jungle with a yell so fearful as that of Jacques Collin, who rose to his feet as a tiger rears to spring, and fired a glance at the doctor as scorching as the flash of a falling thunderbolt. Then he fell back on the bed, exclaiming—

"Oh, my son!"

"Poor man!" said the doctor, moved by this terrific convulsion of nature.

In fact, the first explosion gave way to such utter collapse, that the words: "Oh, my son," were but a murmur.

"Is this one going to die on our hands, too?" said the turnkey.

"No; it is impossible!" Jacques Collin went on, raising himself and looking at the two witnesses of the scene with a dead, cold eye. "You are mistaken; it is not Lucien; you did not see. A man cannot hang himself in one of these cells. Look—how could I hang myself here? All Paris shall answer to me for that boy's life! God owes it to me!"

The warder and the doctor were amazed in their turn—they, whom nothing had astonished for many a long day.

On seeing the governor, Jacques Collin, crushed by the very violence of this outburst of grief, seemed somewhat calmer.

"Here is a letter which the public prosecutor placed in my hands for you, with permission to give it you sealed," said Monsieur Gault.

"From Lucien?" said Jacques Collin.

"Yes, monsieur."

"Is not that young man——"

"He is dead," said the governor. "Even if the doctor had been on the spot, he would, unfortunately, have been too late. The young man died—there—in one of the rooms——"

"May I see him with my own eyes?" asked Jacques Collin timidly. "Will you allow a father to weep over the body of his son?"

"You can, if you like, take his room, for I have orders to remove you from these cells; you are no longer in such close confinement, monsieur."

The prisoner's eyes, from which all light and warmth had fled, turned slowly from the governor to the doctor; Jacques Collin was examining them, fearing some trap, and he was afraid to go out of the cell.

"If you wish to see the body," said Lebrun, "you have no time to lose; it is to be carried away to-night."

"If you have children, gentlemen," said Jacques Collin, "you will understand my state of mind; I hardly know what I am doing. This blow is worse to me than death; but you cannot know what I am saying. Even if you are fathers, it is only after a fashion—I am a mother too—I—I am going mad—I feel it!"

By going through certain passages which open only to the governor, it is possible to get very quickly from the cells to the private rooms. The two sets of rooms are divided by an

underground corridor formed of two massive walls supporting the vault over which the *Galerie Marchande*, as it is called, is built. So Jacques Collin, escorted by the warder, who took his arm, preceded by the governor, and followed by the doctor, in a few minutes reached the cell where Lucien was lying stretched on the bed.

On seeing the body, he threw himself upon it, seizing it in a desperate embrace with a passion and impulse that made these spectators shudder.

"There," said the doctor to Monsieur Gault, "that is an instance of what I was telling you. You see that man clutching the body, and you do not know what a corpse is; it is stone——"

"Leave me alone!" said Jacques Collin in a smothered voice; "I have not long to look at him. They will take him away to——"

He paused at the words "bury him."

"You will allow me to have some relic of my dear boy! Will you be so kind as to cut off a lock of his hair for me, monsieur," he said to the doctor, "for I cannot——"

"He was certainly his son," said Lebrun.

"Do you think so?" replied the governor in a meaning tone, which made the doctor thoughtful for a few minutes.

The governor gave orders that the prisoner was to be left in this cell, and that some locks of hair should be cut for the self-styled father before the body was removed.

At half-past five in the month of May it is easy to read a letter in the *Conciergerie* in spite of the iron bars and the close wire trellice that guard the windows. So Jacques Collin read the dreadful letter while he still held Lucien's hand.

The man is not known who can hold a lump of ice for ten minutes tightly clutched in the hollow of his hand. The cold penetrates to the very life-springs with mortal rapidity. But the effect of that cruel chill, acting like a poison, is as nothing to that which strikes to the soul from the cold, rigid hand of

the dead thus held. Thus Death speaks to Life ; it tells many dark secrets which kill many feelings ; for in matters of feeling is not change death ?

As we read through once more, with Jacques Collin, Lucien's last letter, it will strike us as being what it was to this man—a cup of poison :

“TO THE ABBÉ CARLOS HERRERA.

“MY DEAR ABBÉ:—I have had only benefits from you, and I have betrayed you. This involuntary ingratitude is killing me, and when you read these lines I shall have ceased to exist. You are not here now to save me.

“You had given me full liberty, if I should find it advantageous, to destroy you by flinging you on the ground like a cigar-end ; but I have sacrificed you by a blunder. To escape from a difficulty, deluded by a clever question from the examining judge, I, your spiritual son by adoption and grace, went over to the side of those who aim at killing you at any cost, and insist on proving an identity which I know to be impossible, between you and a French villain. All is said.

“Between a man of your calibre and me—me of whom you tried to make a greater man than I am capable of being—no foolish sentiment can come at the moment of final parting. You hoped to make me powerful and famous, and you have thrown me into the gulf of suicide—that is all. I have long heard the broad pinions of that vertigo beating over my head.

“As you have sometimes said, there is the posterity of Cain and the posterity of Abel. In the great human drama Cain is in opposition. You are descended from Adam through that line, in which the devil still fans the fire of which the first spark was flung on Eve. Among the demons of that pedigree, from time to time we see one of stupendous power, summing up every form of human energy, and resembling the rampant beasts of the desert, whose vitality demands the vast spaces in which they are found. Such men are as dangerous as

lions would be in the heart of Normandy; they must have their prey, and they devour common men and suck the gold of fools. Their sport is so dangerous that at last they kill the humble dog whom they have taken for a companion and made an idol.

“When it is God’s will, these mysterious beings may be a Moses, an Attila, Charlemagne, Mahomet, Robespierre, or Napoleon; but when He leaves a generation of these stupendous tools to rust at the bottom of the ocean, they are no more than a Pugatchef, a Fouché, a Louvel, or the Abbé Carlos Herrera. Gifted with immense power over tenderer souls, they entrap them and knead them. It is grand, it is fine—in its way. It is the poisonous plant with gorgeous coloring that fascinates children in the woods. It is the poetry of evil. Men like you ought to dwell in caves and never come out of them. You have made me live that vast life, and I have had all my share of existence; so I may very well take my head out of the Gordian knot of your policy and slip it into the running noose of my cravat.

“To repair the mischief I have done, I am forwarding to the public prosecutor a retraction of my deposition. You will know how to take advantage of this document.

“In virtue of a will formally drawn up, restitution will be made, Monsieur l’Abbé, of the moneys belonging to your Order which you so imprudently devoted to my use as a result of your paternal affection for me.

“And so, farewell. Farewell, colossal image of Evil and corruption; farewell to you, who, if started on the right road, might have been greater than Ximenes, greater than Richelieu! You have kept your promises. I find myself once more just as I was on the banks of the Charente, after enjoying, by your help, the enchantments of a dream. But, unfortunately, it is not now in the waters of my native place that I shall drown the errors of a boy, but by the Seine, and my pool is a cell in the Conciergerie.

“Do not regret me : my contempt for you is as great as my admiration.
LUCIEN.”

A little before one in the morning, when the men came to fetch away the body, they found Jacques Collin kneeling by the bed, the letter on the floor, dropped, no doubt, as a suicide drops the pistol that has shot him ; but the unhappy man still held Lucien's hand between his own, and was praying to God.

On seeing this man, the porters paused for a moment, for he looked like one of those stone images, kneeling to all eternity on a mediæval tomb, the work of some stone-carver's genius. The sham priest, with eyes as bright as a tiger's but stiffened into supernatural rigidity, so impressed the men that they gently bade him rise.

“Why?” he asked mildly. The audacious *Trompe-la-Mort* was meek as a child.

The governor pointed him out to Monsieur de Chargebœuf ; and he, respecting such grief, and believing that Jacques Collin was indeed the priest he called himself, explained the orders given by Monsieur de Granville with regard to the funeral service and arrangements, showing that it was absolutely necessary that the body should be transferred to Lucien's lodgings, Quai Malaquais, where the priests were waiting to watch by it for the rest of the night.

“It is worthy of that gentleman's well-known magnanimity,” said Jacques Collin sadly. “Tell him, monsieur, that he may rely on my gratitude. Yes, I am in a position to do him great service. Do not forget these words ; they are of the utmost importance to him.

“Oh, monsieur ! strange changes come over a man's spirit when for seven hours he has wept over such a son as he— And I shall see him no more !”

After gazing once more at Lucien with the expression of a mother bereft of her child's remains, Jacques Collin sank in a heap. As he saw Lucien's body carried away, he uttered a

groan that made the men hurry off. The public prosecutor's private secretary and the governor of the prison had already made their escape from the scene.

What had become of that iron spirit ; of the decision which was a match in swiftness for the eye ; of the nature in which thought and action flashed forth together like one flame ; of the sinews hardened by three spells of labor on the hulks, and by three escapes, the muscles which had acquired the metallic temper of a savage's limbs ? Iron will yield to a certain amount of hammering or persistent pressure ; its impenetrable molecules, purified and made homogeneous by man, may become disintegrated, and without being in a state of fusion the metal has lost its power of resistance. Blacksmiths, locksmiths, tool-makers sometimes express this state by saying the iron is *retting*, appropriating a word applied exclusively to hemp, which is reduced to pulp and fibre by maceration. Well, the human soul, or, if you will, the threefold powers of body, heart, and intellect, under certain repeated shocks, get into such a condition as fibrous iron. They too are disintegrated. Science and law and the public seek a thousand causes for the terrible catastrophes on railways caused by the rupture of an iron rail, that of Bellevue being a famous instance ; but no one has asked the evidence of the real experts in such matters, the blacksmiths, who all say the same thing : "The iron was stringy !" The danger cannot be foreseen. Metal that has gone soft and metal that has preserved its tenacity both look exactly alike.

Priest and examining judges often find great criminals in this state. The awful experiences of the Assize Court and the "last toilet" commonly produce this dissolution of the nervous system, even in the strongest natures. Then confessions are blurted by the most firmly set lips ; then the toughest hearts break ; and, strange to say, always at the moment when these confessions are useless, when this weakness as of death snatches from the man the mask of innocence

which made Justice uneasy—for it always is uneasy when the criminal dies without confessing his crime.

Napoleon went through this collapse of every human power on the field of Waterloo.

At eight in the morning, when the warder of the better cells entered the room where Jacques Collin was confined, he found him pale and calm, like a man who has collected all his strength by sheer determination.

“It is the hour for airing in the prison yard,” said the turnkey; “you have not been out for three days; if you choose to take air and exercise, you may.”

Jacques Collin, lost in his absorbing thoughts and taking no interest in himself, regarding himself as a garment with no body in it, a perfect rag, never suspected the trap laid for him by Bibi-Lupin, nor the importance attaching to his walk in the prison yard.

The unhappy man went out mechanically, along the corridor, by the cells built into the magnificent cloisters of the Palace of the Kings, over which is the corridor Saint-Louis, as it is called, leading to the various purlieus of the Court of Appeals. This passage joins that of the better cells; and it is worth noting that the cell in which Louvel was imprisoned, one of the most famous of the regicides, is the room at the right angle formed by the junction of the two corridors. Under the pretty room in the Tour Bonbec there is a spiral staircase leading from the dark passage, and serving the prisoners who are lodged in these cells to go up and down on their way from or to the yard.

Every prisoner, whether committed for trial or already sentenced, and the prisoners under suspicion who have been reprieved from the closest cells—in short, every one in confinement in the Conciergerie—takes exercise in this narrow paved courtyard for some hours every day, especially the early hours of summer mornings. This recreation ground, the anteroom to the scaffold or the hulks on one side, on the

other still clings to the world through the gendarme, the examining judge, and the Assize Court. It strikes a greater chill perhaps than even the scaffold. The scaffold may be a pedestal to soar to heaven from; but the prison yard is every infamy on earth concentrated and unavoidable.

Whether at La Force or at Poissy, at Melun, or at Sainte-Pélagie, a prison yard is a prison yard. The same details are exactly repeated, all but the color of the walls, their height, and the space inclosed. So this Study of Manners would be false to its name if it did not include an exact description of this pandemonium of Paris.

Under the mighty vaulting which supports the lower courts and the Court of Appeals there is, close to the fourth arch, a stone slab, used by Saint-Louis, it is said, for the distribution of alms, and doing duty in our day as a counter for the sale of eatables to the prisoners. So as soon as the prison yard is open to the prisoners, they gather round this stone table, which displays such dainties as jail-birds desire—brandy, rum, and the like.

The two first archways on that side of the yard, facing the fine Byzantine corridor—the only vestige now of Saint-Louis' elegant palace—form a parlor, where the prisoners and their counsel may meet, to which the prisoners have access through a formidable gateway—a double passage, railed off by enormous bars, within the width of the third archway. This double way is like the temporary passages arranged at the door of a theatre to keep the line on occasions when a great success brings a crowd. This parlor, at the very end of the vast entrance-hall of the Conciergerie, and lighted by loop-holes on the yard side, has lately been opened out toward the back, and the opening filled with glass, so that the interviews of the lawyers with their clients are under supervision. This innovation was made necessary by the too great fascinations brought to bear by pretty women on their counsel. Where will morality stop short? Such precautions are like the ready-

made sets of confessional questions for self-examination, where pure imaginations are defiled by meditating on unknown and monstrous depravity. In this parlor, too, parents and friends may be allowed by the authorities to meet the prisoners, whether on remand or awaiting their sentence.

The reader may now understand what the prison yard is to the two hundred prisoners in the Conciergerie: their garden—a garden without trees, beds, or flowers—in short, a prison yard. The parlor and the stone of Saint-Louis, where such food and liquor as are allowed are dispensed, are the only possible means of communication with the outer world.

The hour spent in the yard is the only time when the prisoner is in the open air or the society of his kind; in other prisons those who are sentenced for a term are brought together in workshops; but in the Conciergerie no occupation is allowed, except in the privileged cells. There the absorbing idea in every mind is the drama of the Assize Court, since the culprit comes only to be examined or to be sentenced.

This yard is indeed terrible to behold; it cannot be imagined, it must be seen.

In the first place, the assemblage, in a space forty metres long by thirty wide, of a hundred condemned or suspected criminals, does not constitute the cream of society. These creatures, belonging for the most part to the lowest ranks, are poorly clad; their countenances are base or horrible, for a criminal from the upper sphere of society is, happily, a rare exception. Peculation, forgery, or fraudulent bankruptcy, the only crimes that can bring decent people so low, enjoy the privilege of the better cells, and the prisoner scarcely ever quits it.

This promenade, bounded by fine but formidable blackened walls, by a cloister divided up into cells, by fortifications on the side toward the quay, by the barred cells of the better class on the north, watched by vigilant warders, and filled with a herd of criminals, all meanly suspicious of each other,

is depressing enough in itself; and it becomes terrifying when you find yourself the centre of all those eyes full of hatred, curiosity, and despair, face to face with that degraded crew. Not a gleam of gladness! all is gloom—the place and the men. All is speechless—the walls and men's consciences. To these hapless creatures danger lies everywhere; except in the case of an alliance as ominous as the prison where it was formed, they dare not trust each other.

The police, all-pervading, poisons the atmosphere and taints everything, even the hand-grasp of two criminals who have been intimate. A convict who meets his most familiar comrade does not know that he may not have repented and made a confession to save his own life. This absence of confidence, this dread of the *nark*, mars the liberty, already so illusory, of the prison yard. The “nark” (in French, *le Mouton* or *le coqueux*) is a spy who affects to be sentenced for some serious offense, and whose skill consists in pretending to be a *chum*. The “chum,” in thieves' slang, is a skilled thief, a professional who has cut himself adrift from society, and means to remain a thief all his days, and continues faithful through thick and thin to the laws of the bunco-men.

Crime and madness have a certain resemblance. To see the prisoners of the Conciergerie in the yard, or the madmen in the garden of an asylum, is much the same thing. Prisoners and lunatics walk to and fro, avoiding each other, looking up with more or less strange or vicious glances, according to the mood of the moment, but never cheerful, never grave; they know each other, or they dread each other. The anticipation of their sentence, remorse, and apprehension give all these men, exercising, the anxious, furtive look of the insane. Only the most consummate criminals have the audacity that apes the quietude of respectability, the sincerity of a clear conscience.

As men of the better class are few, and shame keeps the

few whose crimes have brought them within doors, the frequenters of the prison yard are for the most part dressed as workmen. Blouses, long and short, and velveteen jackets preponderate. These coarse or dirty garments, harmonizing with the coarse and sinister faces and brutal manner—somewhat subdued, indeed, by the gloomy reflections that weigh on men in prison—everything, to the silence that reigns, contributes to strike terror or disgust into the rare visitor who, by high influence, has obtained the privilege, seldom granted, of going over the Conciergerie.

Just as the sight of an anatomical museum, where foul diseases are represented by wax models, makes the youth who may be taken there more chaste and apt for nobler and purer love, so the sight of the Conciergerie and of the prison yard, filled with men marked for the hulks or the scaffold or some disgraceful punishment, inspires many, who might not fear that Divine Justice whose voice speaks so loudly to the conscience, with a fear of human justice ; and they come out honest men for a long time after.

As the men who were exercising in the prison yard, when Trompe-la-Mort appeared there, were to be the actors in a scene of crowning importance in the life of Jacques Collin, it will be well to depict a few of the principal personages of this sinister crowd.

Here, as everywhere when men are thrown together, here, as at school even, force, physical and moral, wins the day. Here, then, as on the hulks, crime stamps the man's rank. Those whose head is doomed are the aristocracy. The prison yard, as may be supposed, is a school of criminal law, which is far better learned there than at the Hall on the Place du Panthéon.

A never-failing pleasantry is to rehearse the drama of the Assize Court ; to elect a president, a jury, a public prosecutor, a counsel, and to go through the whole trial. This hideous

farce is played before almost every great trial. At this time a famous case was proceeding in the Criminal Court, that of the dreadful murder committed on the persons of Monsieur and Madame Crottat, the notary's father and mother, retired farmers, who, as this horrible business showed, kept eight hundred thousand francs in gold in their house.

One of the men concerned in this double murder was the notorious Dannepont, known as la Pouraille, a released convict, who for five years had eluded the most active search on the part of the police, under the protection of seven or eight different names. This villain's disguises were so perfect that he had served two years of imprisonment under the name of Delsouq, who was one of his own disciples and a famous thief, though he never, in any of his achievements, went beyond the jurisdiction of the lower Courts. La Pouraille had committed no less than three murders since his dismissal from the hulks. The certainty that he would be executed, not less than the large fortune he was supposed to have, made this man an object of terror and admiration to his fellow-prisoners; for not a farthing of the stolen money had ever been recovered. Even after the events of July, 1830, some persons may remember the terror caused in Paris by this daring crime, worthy to compare in importance with the robbery of medals from the Public Library; for the unhappy tendency of our age is to make a murder the more interesting in proportion to the greater sum of money secured by it.

La Pouraille, a small, lean, dry man, with a face like a ferret, forty-five years old, and one of the celebrities of the prisons he had successively lived in since the age of nineteen, knew Jacques Collin well; how and why will be seen.

Two other convicts, brought with la Pouraille from La Force within these twenty-four hours, had at once acknowledged and made the whole prison yard acknowledge the supremacy of this past-master sealed to the scaffold. One of these convicts, a ticket-of-leave man named Sélérrier, *alias*

l'Auvergnat, Père Ralleau, and le Rouleur, who in the sphere known to the hulks as the buncos was called Fil-de-Soie (or silken thread)—a nickname he owed to the skill with which he slipped through the various perils of the business—was an old ally of Jacques Collin's.

Trompe-la-Mort so keenly suspected Fil-de-Soie of playing a double part, of being at once in the secrets of the bunco-steerers and a spy paid by the police, that he had supposed him to be the prime mover of his arrest in the Maison Vauquer in 1819. Sélérîer, whom we must call Fil-de-Soie, as we shall also call Dannepont la Pouraille, already guilty of evading surveillance, was concerned in certain well-known robberies without bloodshed, which would certainly take him back to the hulks for at least twenty years.

The other convict, named Riganson, and his kept woman, known as la Biffe, were a most formidable couple, members of the buncos. Riganson, on very distant terms with the police from his earliest years, was nicknamed le Biffon. Biffon was the male of la Biffe—for nothing is sacred to the buncos. These fiends respect nothing, neither the law nor religion, not even natural history, whose solemn nomenclature, it is seen, is parodied by them.

Here a digression is necessary ; for Jacques Collin's appearance in the prison yard in the midst of his foes, as had been so cleverly contrived by Bibi-Lupin and the examining judge, and the strange scenes to ensue, would be incomprehensible and impossible without some explanation as to the world of thieves and of the hulks, its laws, its manners, and, above all, its language, its hideous figures of speech being indispensable in this portion of my tale.

So, first of all, a few words must be said as to the vocabulary of sharpers, pickpockets, thieves, and murderers, known as Argot, or thieves' cant, which has of late been introduced into literature with so much success that more than one word of that strange lingo is familiar on the rosy lips of ladies, has

been heard in gilded boudoirs, and become the delight of princes who have often proclaimed themselves "done brown" (*floué*)! And it must be owned, to the surprise no doubt of many persons, that no language is more vigorous or more vivid than that of this underground world, which, from the beginnings of countries with capitals, has dwelt in cellars and slums, in the third limbo of society everywhere (*le troisième dessous*, as the expressive and vivid slang of the theatres has it). For is not the world a stage? *Le troisième dessous* is the lowest cellar under the stage at the opera where the machinery is kept and the men stay who work it, whence the footlights are raised, the ghosts, the blue-devils shot up from hell, and so forth.

Every word of this language is a bold metaphor, ingenious or horrible. A man's breeches are his kicks or trucks (*montante*, a word that need not be explained). In this language you do not sleep, you snooze, or doss (*pioncer*—and note how vigorously expressive the word is of the sleep of the hunted, wary, distrustful animal called a thief, which as soon as it is in safety drops—rolls—into the gulf of deep slumber so necessary under the mighty wings of suspicion always hovering over it; a fearful sleep, like that of a wild beast that can sleep, nay, and snore, and yet its ears are alert with caution).

In this idiom everything is savage. The syllables which begin or end the words are harsh and curiously startling. A woman is a trip or a moll (*une large*). And it is poetical too: straw is *la plume de Beauce*, a farmyard feather bed. The word midnight is paraphrased by twelve leads striking—it makes one shiver! *Rincer une cambriole* is to "screw the shop," to rifle a room. What a feeble expression is to go to bed in comparison with "to doss" (*piausser*, make a new skin). What picturesque imagery! Work your dominoes (*jouer des dominos*) is to eat; how can men eat with the police at their heels?

And this language is always growing; it keeps pace with

civilization, and is enriched with some new expression by every fresh invention. The potato, discovered and introduced by Louis XVI. and Parmentier, was at once dubbed in French slang as the pig's orange (*Orange à Cochons*) [the Irish have called them bog oranges]. Bank-bills are invented; the buncos at once call them flimsies (*fafiots garotés*, from "Garot," the name of the cashier whose signature they bear). Flimsy! (*fafiot*). Cannot you hear the rustle of the thin paper? The thousand franc-bill is male flimsy (in French), the five hundred franc-bill is the female; and convicts will, you may be sure, find some whimsical name for the hundred and two hundred franc-notes.

In 1790 Guillotin invented, with humane intent, the expeditious machine which solved all the difficulties involved in the problem of capital punishment. Convicts and prisoners from the hulks forthwith investigated this contrivance, standing as it did on the monarchical borderland of the old system and the frontier of modern legislation; they instantly gave it the name of *l'Abbaye de Monte-à-Regret*. They looked at the angle formed by the steel blade, and described its action as reaping (*faucher*); and when it is remembered that the hulks are called the meadow (*le pré*), philologists must admire the inventiveness of these horrible *vocables*, as Charles Nodier would have said.

The high antiquity of this kind of slang is also noteworthy. A tenth of the words are of old Romanesque origin, another tenth are the old Gaulish French of Rabelais. *Effondrer*, to thrash a man, to give him what for; *otolondrer*, to annoy or to "spur" him; *cambríoler*, doing anything in a room; *aubert*, money; *Gironde*, a beauty (the name of a river of Languedoc); *fouillousse*, a pocket—a "cly"—are all French of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The word *affe*, meaning life, is of the highest antiquity. From *affe* anything that disturbs life is called *affres* (a rowing or scolding), hence *affreux*, anything that troubles life.

About a hundred words are derived from the language of Panurge, a name symbolizing the people, for it is derived from two Greek words signifying all-working.

Science is changing the face of the world by constructing railroads. In Argot the train is *le roulant Vif*, the rattler.

The name given to the head while still on the shoulders—*la Sorbonne*—shows the antiquity of this dialect which is mentioned by very early romance-writers, as Cervantes, the Italian story-tellers, and Aretino. In all ages the moll, the prostitute, the heroine of so many old-world romances, has been the protectress, companion, and comfort of the sharper, the thief, the pickpocket, the sneak-thief, and the burglar.

Prostitution and robbery are the male and female forms of protest made by the natural state against the social state. Even philosophers, the innovators of to-day, the humanitarians with the communists and Fourierists in their train, come at last, without knowing it, to the same conclusion—prostitution and theft. The thief does not argue out questions of property, of inheritance, and social responsibility in sophistical books; he absolutely ignores them. To him theft is appropriating his own. He does not discuss marriage; he does not complain of it; he does not insist, in printed Utopian dreams, on the mutual consent and bond of souls which can never become general; he pairs with a vehemence of which the bonds are constantly riveted by the hammer of necessity. Modern innovators write unctuous theories, long drawn, and nebulous or philanthropical romances; but the thief acts. He is as clear as a fact, as logical as a blow; and then his style!

Another thing worth noting: the world of prostitutes, thieves, and murderers of the galleys and the prisons forms a population of about sixty to eighty thousand souls, men and women. Such a world is not to be disdained in a picture of modern manners and a literary reproduction of the social body. The law, the gendarmerie, and the police constitute a body almost equal in number; is not that strange? This

antagonism of persons perpetually seeking and avoiding each other, and fighting a vast and highly dramatic duel, are what are sketched in this Study. It has been the same thing with thieving and public harlotry as with the stage, the police, the priesthood, and the gendarmerie. In these six walks of life the individual contracts an indelible character. He can no longer be himself. The stigmata of ordination are as immutable as those of the soldier. And it is the same in all other callings which are strongly in opposition, strong contrasts with civilization. These violent, eccentric, singular signs—*sui generis*—are what make the harlot, the robber, the murderer, the ticket-of-leave man, so easily recognizable by their foes, the spy and the police, to whom they are as game to the sportsman: they have a gait, a manner, a complexion, a look, a color, a smell—in short, infallible marks about them. Hence the highly developed art of disguise which the heroes of the hulks acquire.

One word yet as to the constitution of this world apart, which the abolition of branding, the mitigation of penalties, and the silly leniency of juries are making a threatening evil. In about twenty years Paris will be beleaguered by an army of forty thousand reprieved criminals; the department of the Seine and its fifteen hundred thousand inhabitants being the only place in France where these poor wretches can be hidden. To them Paris is what the virgin forest is to beasts of prey.

The bunco-steerers, or, more exactly, the upper class of thieves, which is the Faubourg Saint-Germain, the aristocracy of the tribe, had, in 1816, after the peace which made life hard for so many men, formed an association called *les grands fanandels*—the Great Pals—consisting of the most noted master-thieves and certain bold spirits at that time bereft of any means of living. This word *pal* means brother, friend, and comrade all in one. And these “Great Pals,” the cream of the thieving fraternity, for more than twenty years were

the Court of Appeals, the Institute of Learning, and the Chamber of Peers of this community. These men all had their private means, with funds in common, and a code of their own. They knew each other, and were pledged to help and succor each other in difficulties. And they were all superior to the tricks or snares of the police, had a charter of their own, passwords, and signs of recognition.

From 1815 to 1819 these dukes and peers of the prison world had formed the famous association of the Ten-thousand, so styled by reason of an agreement in virtue of which no job was to be undertaken by which less than ten thousand francs could be stolen.

At that very time, in 1829-30, some memoirs were brought out in which the collective force of this association and the names of the leaders were published by a famous member of the police-force. It was terrifying to find there an army of skilled rogues, male and female; so numerous, so clever, so constantly lucky, that such thieves as Pastourel, Collonge, or Chimaux, men of fifty and sixty, were described as outlaws from society since their earliest years! What a confession of the ineptitude of justice that rogues so old should be at large!

Jacques Collin had been the cashier, not only of the "Ten-thousand," but also of the "Great Pals," the heroes of the hulks. Competent authorities admit that the hulks have always owned large sums. This curious fact is quite conceivable. Stolen goods are never recovered but in very singular cases. The condemned criminal, who can take nothing with him, is obliged to trust somebody's honesty and capacity, and to deposit his money as, in the world of honesty, money is placed in a bank.

Long ago Bibi-Lupin, now for ten years a chief of the department of Public Safety, had been a member of the aristocracy of "Pals." His treason had resulted from offended pride; he had been constantly set aside in favor of Trompe-la-Mort's

superior intelligence and prodigious strength. Hence his persistent vindictiveness against Jacques Collin ; also, certain compromises between Bibi-Lupin and his old companions, which the magistrates were beginning to take seriously.

So in his desire for vengeance, to which the examining judge had given play under the necessity of identifying Jacques Collin, the chief of the Safety had very skillfully chosen his allies by setting la Pouraille, Fil-de-Soie, and Biffon on the sham Spaniard—for la Pouraille and Fil-de-Soie both belonged to the "Ten-thousand," and le Biffon was a "Great Pal."

La Biffe, le Biffon's formidable slut, who to this day evades all the pursuit of the police by her skill in disguising herself as a lady, was at liberty. This woman, who successfully apes a marquise, a countess, a baroness, keeps a carriage and men-servants. This Jacques Collin in petticoats is the only woman who can compare with Asia, Jacques Collin's right hand. And, in fact, every hero of the hulks is backed up by a devoted woman. Prison records and the secret papers of the law courts will tell you this ; no honest woman's love, not even that of a bigot for her spiritual director, has ever been greater than the attachment of a mistress who shares the dangers of a great criminal.

With these men a passion is almost always the first cause of their daring enterprises and murders. The excessive love which—constitutionally, as the doctors say—makes woman irresistible to them, calls every moral and physical force of these powerful natures into action. Hence the idleness which consumes their days, for excesses of passion necessitate sleep and restorative food. Hence their loathing of all work, driving these creatures to have recourse to rapid ways of getting money. And yet the need of a living, and of high living, violent as it is, is but a trifle in comparison with the extravagance to which these generous Médors are prompted by the mistress to whom they want to give jewels

and dress, and who—always greedy—love rich food. The baggage wants a shawl, the lover steals it, and the woman sees in this a proof of love.

This is how robbery begins; and robbery, if we examine the human soul through a lens, will be seen to be an almost natural instinct in man.

Robbery leads to murder, and murder leads the lover step by step to the scaffold.

Ill-regulated physical desire is therefore, in these men, if we may believe the medical faculty, at the root of seven-tenths of the crimes committed. And, indeed, the proof is always found, evident, palpable at the *post-mortem* examination of the criminal after his execution. And these monstrous lovers, the scarecrows of society, are adored by their mistresses. It is this female devotion, squatting faithfully at the prison gate, always eagerly balking the cunning of the examiner, and incorruptibly keeping the darkest secrets, which makes so many trials impenetrable mysteries.

In this, again, lies the strength as well as the weakness of the accused. In the vocabulary of a prostitute, to be honest means to break none of the laws of this attachment, to give all her money to the man who is nabbed, to look after his comforts, to be faithful to him in every way, to undertake anything for his sake. The bitterest insult one of these women can fling in the teeth of another wretched creature is to accuse her of infidelity to a lover *in the jug* (in prison). In that case such a woman is considered to have no heart.

La Pouraille was passionately in love with a woman, as will be seen.

Fil-de-Soie, an egotistical philosopher, who thieved to provide for the future, was a good deal like Paccard, Jacques Collin's satellite, who had fled with Prudence Servien and the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs between them. He had no attachment, he contemned women, and loved no one but Fil-de-Soie.

As to le Biffon, he derived his nickname from his connection with la Biffe. (La Biffe is scavenging, rag-picking.) And these three distinguished members of *la haute pègre*, the aristocracy of roguery, had a reckoning to demand of Jacques Collin, accounts that were somewhat hard to bring to book.

No one but the cashier could know how many of his clients were still alive, and what each man's share would be. The mortality to which the depositors were peculiarly liable had formed a basis for Trompe-la-Mort's calculations when he resolved to embezzle the funds for Lucien's benefit. By keeping himself out of the way of the police and of his pals for nine years, Jacques Collin was almost certain to have fallen heir, by the terms of agreement among the associates, to two-thirds of the depositors. Beside, could he not plead that he had repaid the pals who had been scragged? In fact, no one had any hold over these Great Pals. His comrades trusted him by compulsion, for the hunted life led by convicts necessitates the most delicate confidence between the gentry of this crew of savages. So Jacques Collin, a defaulter for a hundred thousand crowns, might now possibly be quit for a hundred thousand francs. At this moment, as we see, la Pouraille, one of Jacques Collin's creditors, had but ninety days to live. And la Pouraille, the possessor of a sum vastly greater, no doubt, than that placed in his pal's keeping, would probably prove easy to deal with.

One of the infallible signs by which prison governors and their agents, the police and warders, recognize old staggers (*chevaux de retour*)—that is to say, men who have already "eaten beans" (*les gourganes*, a kind of haricots provided for prison fare)—is their familiarity with prison ways; those who have been *in* before, of course, know the manners and customs; they are at home, and nothing surprises them.

And Jacques Collin, thoroughly on his guard, had, until now, played his part to admiration as an innocent man and

stranger, both at La Force and at the Conciergerie. But now, broken by grief, and by two deaths—for he had died twice over during that dreadful night—he was Jacques Collin once more. The warder was astounded to find that the Spanish priest needed no telling as to the way to the prison yard. The perfect actor forgot his part; he went down the corkscrew stairs in the Tour Bonbec as one who knew the Conciergerie.

“Bibi-Lupin is right,” said the turnkey to himself; “he is an old stager; he is Jacques Collin.”

At the moment when Trompe-la-Mort appeared in the sort of frame to his figure made by the door into the tower, the prisoners, having made their purchases at the stone table called after Saint-Louis, were scattered about the yard, always too small for their number. So the new-comer was seen by all of them at once, and all the more promptly, because nothing can compare for keenness with the eye of a prisoner, who in a prison yard feels like a spider watching in its web. And this comparison is mathematically exact; for the range of vision being limited on all sides by high dark walls, the prisoners can always see, even without looking at them, the door through which the warders come and go, the windows of the parlor, and the stairs of the Tour Bonbec—the only exits from the yard. In this utter isolation every trivial incident is an event, everything is interesting; the tedium—a tedium like that of a tiger in a cage—increases their alertness tenfold.

It is necessary to note that Jacques Collin, dressed like a priest who is not strict as to costume, wore black knee breeches, black stockings, shoes with silver buckles, a black vest, and a long coat of dark-brown cloth of a certain cut that betrays the priest whatever he may do, especially when these details are completed by a characteristic style of hair-cutting. Jacques Collin's wig was eminently ecclesiastical, and wonderfully natural.

“Halloo!” said la Pouraille to le Biffon, “that's a bad sign! A rook! (*sanglier*, a priest). How did he come here?”

"He is one of their 'narks'" (*trucs*, spies), "of a new make," replied Fil-de-Soie, "some runner with the bracelets" (*marchand de lacets*—equivalent to a "fly-cop") "looking out for his man."

The detective boasts of many names in French slang; when he is after a thief, he is "the man with the bracelets" (*marchand de lacets*); when he has him in charge, he is a bird of ill-omen (*hirondelle de la Grève*); when he escorts him to the scaffold, he is "groom to the guillotine" (*hussard de la guillotine*).

To complete our study of the prison yard, two more of the prisoners must be hastily sketched in. Sélérîer, *alias* l'Auvergnat, *alias* le Père Ralleau, called le Rouleur, *alias* Fil-de-Soie—he had thirty names, and as many passports—will henceforth be spoken of by this name only, as he was called by no other among the buncoists. This profound philosopher, who saw a spy in the sham priest, was a brawny fellow of about five feet eight, whose muscles were all marked by strange bosses. He had an enormous head in which a pair of half-closed eyes sparkled like fire—the eyes of a bird of prey, with gray, dull, skinny eyelids. At a first glance his face resembled that of a wolf, his jaws were so broad, powerful, and prominent; but the cruelty and even ferocity suggested by this likeness were counterbalanced by the cunning and eagerness of his face, though it was scarred by the smallpox. The margin of each scar being sharply cut gave a sort of wit to his expression; it was seamed with ironies. The life of a criminal—a life of hunger and thirst, of nights spent in bivouacking on the quays and river banks, on bridges and streets, and the orgies of strong drink by which successes are celebrated—had laid, as it were, a varnish over these features. Fil-de-Soie, if seen in his undisguised person, would have been marked by any constable or gendarme as his prey; but he was a match for Jacques Collin in the arts of make-up and dress. Just now Fil-de-Soie, in undress, like a great actor, who is well got

up only on the stage, wore a sort of shooting jacket bereft of buttons, and whose ripped button-holes showed the white lining, squalid green slippers, nankin trousers now a dingy gray, and on his head a cap without a peak, under which an old bandana was tied, streaky with rents, and washed out.

Le Biffon was a complete contrast to Fil-de-Soie. This famous robber, short, burly, and fat, but active, with a livid complexion, and deep-set black eyes, dressed like a cook, standing squarely on very bandy legs, was alarming to behold, for in his countenance all the features predominated that are most typical of the carnivorous beast.

Fil-de-Soie and le Biffon were always wheedling la Pouraille, who had lost all hope. The murderer knew that he would be tried, sentenced, and executed within four months. Indeed, Fil-de-Soie and le Biffon, la Pouraille's chums, never called him anything but *le Chanoine de l'Abbaye de Monte-à-Regret* (a grim paraphrase for a man condemned to the guillotine). It is easy to understand why Fil-de-Soie and le Biffon should fawn on la Pouraille. The man had somewhere hidden two hundred and fifty thousand francs in gold, his share of the spoil found in the house of the Crottats, the "victims," in newspaper phrase. What a splendid fortune to leave to two pals, though the two old stagers would be sent back to the galleys within a few days! Le Biffon and Fil-de-Soie would be sentenced for a term of fifteen years for robbery with violence, without prejudice to the ten years' penal servitude on a former sentence, which they had taken the liberty of cutting short. So, though one had twenty-two and the other twenty-six years of imprisonment to look forward to, they both hoped to escape, and come back to find la Pouraille's secret mine of gold.

But the "Ten-thousand man" kept his secret; he did not see the use of telling it before he was sentenced. He belonged to the "upper ten" of the hulks, and had never betrayed his accomplices. His temper was well known; Monsieur Pop-

rubbing his hands. "Yes, it is his cut, his build ; but what has he done to himself? He looks quite different."

"I know what he is up to!" cried Fil-de-Soie; "he has some plan in his head. He wants to see the boy" (*sa tante*) "who is to be executed before long."

The persons known in prison slang as *tantes* or *aunts* may be best described in the ingenious words of the governor of one of the great prisons to the late Lord Durham, who, during his stay in Paris, visited every prison. So curious was he to see every detail of French justice, that he even persuaded Sanson, at that time the executioner, to erect the scaffold and decapitate a living calf, that he might thoroughly understand the working of the machine made famous by the Revolution. The governor having shown him everything—the yards, the workshops, and the underground cells—pointed to a part of the building, and said, "I need not take your lordship there; it is the *quartier des tantes*." "Oh," said Lord Durham, "what are they?" "The third sex, my lord."

"And they are going to scrag Théodore!" said la Pouraille, "such a pretty boy! And such a light hand! such cheek! What a loss to society!"

"Yes, Théodore Calvi is yamming his last meal," said le Biffon. "His molls will pipe their eyes, for the little scallawag was a great pet."

"So you're here, old chap?" said la Pouraille to Jacques Collin. And, arm-in-arm with his two acolytes, he barred the way to the new arrival. "Why, boss, have you had yourself jappanned?" he went on.

"I hear you have nobbled our pile" (stolen our money), le Biffon added, in a threatening tone.

"You have just got to stump up the tin?" said Fil-de-Soie.

The three questions were fired at him like three pistol-shots.

"Do not make game of an unhappy priest sent here by

mistake," Jacques Collin replied mechanically, recognizing his three comrades.

"That is the sound of his pipe, if it is not quite the cut of his mug," said la Pouraille, laying his hand on Jacques Collin's shoulder.

This action, and the sight of his three chums, startled the "Boss" out of his dejection, and brought him back to a consciousness of reality; for during that dreadful night he had lost himself in the infinite spiritual world of feeling, seeking some new road.

"Do not blow the gaff on your boss!" said Jacques Collin in a hollow threatening tone, not unlike the low growl of a lion. "The reelers are here; let them make fools of themselves. I am faking to help a pal who is awfully down on his luck."

He spoke with the unction of a priest trying to convert the wretched, and a look which flashed round the yard, took in the warders under the archways, and pointed them out with a wink to his three companions.

"Are there not narks about? Keep your peepers open and a sharp lookout. Don't know me, Nanty parnarly, and soap me down for a priest, or I will do for you all, you and your molls and your blunt."

"What, do you funk our blabbing?" said Fil-de-Soie. "Have you come to help your boy to guy?"

"Madeleine is getting ready to be turned off in the square" (the Place de Grève), said la Pouraille.

"Théodore!" said Jacques Collin, repressing a start and a cry.

"They will have his nut off," la Pouraille went on; "he was booked for the scaffold two months ago."

Jacques Collin felt sick, his knees almost failed him; but his three comrades held him up, and he had the presence of mind to clasp his hands with an expression of contrition. La Pouraille and le Biffon respectfully supported the sacri-

legious Trompe-la-Mort, while Fil-de-Soie ran to a warder on guard at the gate leading to the parlor.

"That venerable priest wants to sit down; send out a chair for him," said he.

And so Bibi-Lupin's plot had failed.

Trompe-la-Mort, like a Napoleon recognized by his soldiers, had won the submission and respect of the three felons. Two words had done it. Your molls and your blunt—your women and your money—epitomizing every true affection of man. This threat was to the three convicts an indication of supreme power. The boss still had their fortune in his hands. Still omnipotent outside the prison, their boss had not betrayed them, as the false pals said.

Their chief's immense reputation for skill and inventiveness stimulated their curiosity; for, in prison, curiosity is the only goad of these blighted spirits. And Jacques Collin's daring disguise, kept up even under the bolts and locks of the Conciergerie, dazzled the three felons.

"I have been in close confinement for four days and did not know that Théodore was so near the *Abbaye*," said Jacques Collin. "I came in to save a poor little chap who scragged himself here yesterday at four o'clock, and now here is another misfortune. I have not an ace in my hand——"

"Poor old boy!" said Fil-de-Soie.

"Old Scratch has cut me!" cried Jacques Collin, tearing himself free from his supporters, and drawing himself up with a fierce look. "There comes a time when the world is too many for us! The beaks gobble us up at last."

The governor of the Conciergerie, informed of the Spanish priest's weak state, came himself to the prison yard to observe him; he made him sit down on a chair in the sun, studying him with the keen acumen which increases day by day in the practice of such functions, though hidden under an appearance of indifference.

"Oh! heaven!" cried Jacques Collin. "To be mixed

up with such creatures, the dregs of society—felons and murderers! But God will not desert His servant! My dear sir, my stay here shall be marked by deeds of charity which shall live in men's memories. I will convert these unhappy creatures, they shall learn they have souls, that life eternal awaits them, and that, though they have lost all on earth, they still may win heaven—heaven which they may purchase by true and genuine repentance."

Twenty or thirty prisoners had gathered in a group behind the three terrible convicts, whose ferocious looks had kept a space of three feet between them and their inquisitive companions, and they heard this address, spoken with evangelical unction.

"Ay, Monsieur Gault," said the formidable la Pouraille, "we will listen to what this one may say——"

"I have been told," Jacques Collin went on, "that there is in this prison a man condemned to death."

"The rejection of his appeal is at this moment being read to him," said Monsieur Gault.

"I do not know what that means," said Jacques Collin, artlessly looking about him.

"Golly, what a flat!" said the young fellow, who, a few minutes since, had asked Fil-de-Soie about the beans on the hulks.

"Why, it means that he is to be scragged to-day or to-morrow."

"Scragged?" asked Jacques Collin, whose air of innocence and ignorance filled his three pals with admiration.

"In their slang," said the governor, "that means that he will suffer the penalty of death. If the clerk is reading the appeal, the executioner will no doubt have orders for the execution. The unhappy man has persistently refused the offices of the chaplain."

"Ah! Monsieur le Directeur, this is a soul to save!" cried Jacques Collin, and the sacrilegious wretch clasped his hands

with the expression of a despairing lover, which to the watchful governor seemed nothing less than divine fervor. "Ah, monsieur," Trompe-la-Mort went on, "let me prove to you what I am, and how much I can do, by allowing me to incite that hardened heart to repentance. God has given me a power of speech which produces great changes. I crush men's hearts; I open them. What are you afraid of? Send me with an escort of gendarmes, of turnkeys—whom you will."

"I will inquire whether the prison chaplain will allow you to take his place," said Monsieur Gault.

And the governor withdrew, struck by the expression, perfectly indifferent, though inquisitive, with which the convicts and the prisoners on remand stared at this priest, whose unctuous tones lent a charm to his half-French, half-Spanish lingo.

"How did you come in here, Monsieur l'Abbé?" asked the youth who had questioned Fil-de-Soie.

"Oh, by a mistake!" replied Jacques Collin, eyeing the young gentleman from head to foot. "I was found in the house of a courtesan who had died, and was immediately robbed. It was proved that she had killed herself, and the thieves—probably the servants—have not yet been caught."

"And it was for that theft that your young man hanged himself?"

"The poor boy, no doubt, could not endure the thought of being blighted by his unjust imprisonment," said Trompe-la-Mort, raising his eyes to heaven.

"Aye," said the young man; "they were coming to set him free just when he had killed himself. What bad luck!"

"Only innocent souls can be thus worked on by their imagination," said Jacques Collin. "For, observe, he was the loser by the theft."

"How much money was it?" asked Fil-de-Soie, the deep and cunning.

"Seven hundred and fifty thousand francs," said Jacques Collin blandly.

The three convicts looked at each other and withdrew from the group that had gathered round the sham priest.

"He screwed the moll's place himself!" said Fil-de-Soie in a whisper to le Biffon, "and they want to put us in a blue funk for our cartwheels" (*thuns de balles*, five-franc pieces).

"He will always be the boss of the heavy-swells," replied la Pouraille. "Our pieces are safe enough."

La Pouraille, wishing to find some man he could trust, had an interest in considering Jacques Collin an honest man. And in prison, of all places, a man believes what he hopes.

"I'll bet you anything, he will come round the big boss and save his chum!" said Fil-de-Soie.

"If he does that," said le Biffon, "though I don't believe he is really God, he must certainly have smoked a pipe with old Scratch, as they say."

"Didn't you hear him say: 'Old Scratch has cut me?'" said Fil-de-Soie.

"Oh!" cried la Pouraille, "if only he would save my nut, what a time I would have with my whack of the shiners and the yellow boys I have stowed."

"Do what he bids you!" said Fil-de-Soie.

"You don't say so?" sneered la Pouraille, looking at his pal.

"What a flat you are! You will be booked for the Ab-baye!" said le Biffon. "You have no other door to budge, if you want to keep on your pins, to yam, wet your whistle, and fake to the end; you must take his orders."

"That's all right," said la Pouraille. "There is not one of us that will blow the gaff, or, if he does, I will take him where I am going——"

"And he'll do it too," cried Fil-de-Soie.

The least sympathetic reader, who has no pity for this strange

race, may conceive of the state of mind of Jacques Collin, finding himself between the dead body of the idol whom he had been bewailing during five hours that night and the imminent end of his former comrade—the dead body of Théodore, the young Corsican. Only to see the boy would demand extraordinary cleverness; to save him would need a miracle; but he was thinking of it.

For the better comprehension of what Jacques Collin proposed to attempt, it must here be remarked that murderers and thieves, all the men who people the galleys, are not so formidable as is generally supposed. With a few rare exceptions these creatures are all cowards, in consequence, no doubt, of the constant alarms which weigh on their spirits. The faculties being perpetually on the stretch in thieving, and the success of a stroke of business depending on the exertion of every vital force, with a readiness of wit to match their dexterity of hand, and an alertness which exhausts the nervous system; these violent exertions of will once over, they become stupid, just as a singer or a dancer drops quite exhausted after a fatiguing *pas seul*, or one of those tremendous duets which modern composers inflict on the public.

Malefactors are, in fact, so entirely bereft of commonsense, or so much oppressed by fear, that they become absolutely childish. Credulous to the last degree, they are caught by the bird-lime of the simplest snare. When they have done a successful “job,” they are in such a state of prostration that they immediately rush into the debaucheries they crave; they then get drunk on wine and spirits, and throw themselves madly into the arms of their women to recover composure by dint of exhausting their strength, and to forget their crime by forgetting their reason.

Then they are at the mercy of the police. When once they are in custody they lose their heads, and long for hope so blindly that they believe anything; indeed, there is nothing too absurd for them to accept it. An instance will suffice to show how

far the simplicity of a criminal who has been nabbed will carry him. Bibi-Lupin, not long before, had extracted a confession from a murderer of nineteen by making him believe that no one under age was ever executed. When this lad was transferred to the Conciergerie to be sentenced after the rejection of his appeal, this terrible man came to see him.

"Are you sure you are not yet twenty?" said he.

"Yes, I am only nineteen and a half."

"Well, then," replied Bibi-Lupin, "you may be quite sure of one thing—you will never see twenty."

"Why?"

"Because you will be scragged within three days," replied the police agent.

The murderer, who had believed even after sentence was passed that a minor would never be executed, collapsed like an *omelette soufflée*.

Such men, cruel only from the necessity for suppressing evidence, for they murder only to get rid of witnesses (and this is one of the arguments adduced by those who desire the abrogation of capital punishment)—these giants of dexterity and skill, whose sleight-of-hand, whose rapid sight, whose every sense is as alert as that of a savage—are heroes of evil only on the stage of their exploits. Not only do their difficulties begin as soon as the crime is committed—for they are as much bewildered by the need for concealing the stolen goods as they were depressed by necessity—but they are as weak as a woman in childbed. The vehemence of their schemes is terrific; in success they become like children. In a word, their nature is that of the wild beast—easy to kill when it is full fed. In prison these strange beings are men in dissimulation and in secretiveness, which never yields till the last moment, when they are crushed and broken by the tedium of imprisonment.

It may hence be understood how it was that the three convicts, instead of betraying their chief, were eager to serve

him; and, as they suspected he was now the owner of the stolen seven hundred and fifty thousand francs, they admired him for his calm resignation, under bolt and bar of the Conciergerie, believing him entirely capable of protecting, perhaps liberating, them all.

When Monsieur Gault left the sham priest, he returned through the parlor to his office and went in search of Bibi-Lupin, who for twenty minutes, since Jacques Collin had gone downstairs, had been on the watch with his eye at a peephole in a window looking out on the prison yard.

"Not one of them recognized him," said Monsieur Gault, "and Napolitas, who is on duty, did not hear a word. The poor priest all through the night, in his deep distress, did not say a word which could imply that his cassock covers Jacques Collin."

"That shows that he is used to prison life," said the police agent.

Napolitas, Bibi-Lupin's secretary, being unknown to the criminals then in the Conciergerie, was playing the part of the young gentleman imprisoned for forgery.

"Well, but he wishes to be allowed to hear the confession of the young fellow who is sentenced to death," said the governor.

"To be sure! That is our last chance," cried Bibi-Lupin. "I had forgotten that. Théodore Calvi, the young Corsican, was the man chained to Jacques Collin; they say that on the hulks Jacques Collin made him famous pads——"

The convicts on the galleys contrive a kind of pad to slip between their skin and the fetters to deaden the pressure of the iron ring on their ankles and instep; these pads, made of tow and rags, are known as *patarasses*.

"Who is warder over the man?" asked Bibi-Lupin.

"Cœur la Virole."

"Very well; I will go and make up as a gendarme, and be

on the watch; I shall hear what they say. I will be even with them."

"But if it should be Jacques Collin, are you not afraid of his recognizing you and throttling you?" said the governor to Bibi-Lupin.

"As a gendarme I shall have my sword," replied the other; "and, beside, if he is Jacques Collin, he will never do anything that will risk his neck; and if he is a priest, I shall be safe."

"Then you have no time to lose," said Monsieur Gault; "it is half-past eight. Father Sauteloup has just read the reply to his appeal, and Monsieur Sanson (the executioner) is waiting in the order-room."

"Yes, it is to-day's job, the 'widows' huzzars'" (*les hussards de la veuve*, another horrible name for the functionaries of the guillotine) "are ordered out," replied Bibi-Lupin. "Still, I cannot wonder that the prosecutor-general should hesitate; the boy has always declared that he is innocent, and there is, in my opinion, no conclusive evidence against him."

"He is a thorough Corsican," said Monsieur Gault; "he has not said a word, and has held firm all through."

The last words of the governor of the prison summed up the dismal tale of a man condemned to die. A man cut off from among the living by law belongs to the bench. The bench is paramount; it is answerable to nobody, it obeys its own conscience. The prison belongs to the bench, which controls it absolutely. Poetry has taken possession of this social theme, "the man condemned to death"—a subject truly apt to strike the imagination! And poetry has been sublime on it. Prose has no resource but fact; still, the fact is appalling enough to hold its own against verse. The existence of a condemned man who has not confessed his crime, or betrayed his accomplices, is one of fearful torment. This is no case of iron boots, of water poured into the stomach, or of limbs racked by hideous machinery; it is hidden and, so to

speak, negative torture. The condemned wretch is given over to himself with a companion whom he cannot but distrust.

The amiability of modern philanthropy fancies it has understood the dreadful torment of isolation, but this is a mistake. Since the abolition of torture, the bench, in a natural anxiety to reassure the too sensitive consciences of the jury, had guessed what a terrible auxiliary isolation would prove to justice in seconding remorse.

Solitude is a void ; and nature has as great a horror of a moral void as she has of a physical vacuum. Solitude is habitable only to a man of genius who can people it with ideas, the children of the spiritual world ; or to one who contemplates the works of the Creator, to whom it is bright with the light of heaven, alive with the breath and voice of God. Except for these two beings—so near to paradise—solitude is to the mind what torture is to the body. Between solitude and the torture-chamber there is all the difference that there is between a nervous malady and a surgical disease. It is suffering multiplied by infinitude. The body borders on the infinite through its nerves, as the spirit does through thought. And, in fact, in the annals of the Paris law courts the criminals who do not confess can be easily counted.

This terrible situation, which in some cases assumes appalling importance—in politics, for instance, when a dynasty or a state is involved—will find a place in the HUMAN COMEDY. But here a description of the stone box in which, after the Restoration, the law shut up a man condemned to death in Paris, may serve to give an idea of the terrors of a felon's last day on earth.

Before the Revolution of July there was in the Conciergerie, and indeed there still is, a condemned cell. This room, backing on the governor's office, is divided from it by a thick wall of strong masonry, and the other side of it is formed by a wall seven or eight feet thick, which supports one end of the immense Salle des Pas-Perdus. It is entered through the first door in

the long dark passage in which the eye loses itself when looking from the middle of the vaulted gateway. This ill-omened room is lighted by a funnel, barred by a formidable grating, and hardly perceptible on going into the Conciergerie yard, for it has been pierced in the narrow space between the office window close to the railing of the gateway, and the place where the office clerk sits—a den like a cupboard contrived by the architect at the end of the entrance court.

This position accounts for the fact that the room thus inclosed between four immensely thick walls should have been devoted, when the Conciergerie was reconstituted, to this terrible and funereal service. Escape is impossible. The passage, leading to the cells for solitary confinement and to the women's quarters, faces the stove where gendarmes and warders are always collected together. The air-hole, the only outlet to the open air, is nine feet above the floor, and looks out on the first court, which is guarded by sentries at the outer gate. No human power can make any impression on the walls. Beside, a man sentenced to death is at once secured in a straight waistcoat, a garment which precludes all use of the hands; he is chained by one foot to his camp-bed, and he has a fellow-prisoner to watch and attend on him. The room is paved with thick flags, and the light is so dim that it is hard to see anything.

It is impossible not to feel chilled to the marrow on going in, even now, though for sixteen years the cell has never been used, in consequence of the changes effected in Paris in the treatment of criminals under sentence. Imagine the guilty man there with his remorse for company, in silence and darkness, two elements of horror, and you will wonder how he ever failed to go mad. What a nature must that be whose temper can resist such treatment, with the added misery of enforced idleness and inaction.

And yet Théodore Calvi, a Corsican, now twenty-seven years of age, muffled, as it were, in a shroud of absolute re-

serve, had for two monthsⁱ held out against the effects of this dungeon and the insidious chatter of the prisoner placed to entrap him.

These were the strange circumstances under which the Corsican had been condemned to death. Though the case is a very curious one, our account of it must be brief. It is impossible to introduce a long digression at the climax of a narrative already so much prolonged, since its only interest is in so far as it concerns Jacques Collin, the vertebral column, so to speak, which, by its sinister persistency, connects "Father Goriot" with "Lost Illusions" and "Lost Illusions" with this Study. And, indeed, the reader's imagination will be able to work out the obscure case which at this moment was causing great uneasiness to the jury of the sessions, before whom Théodore Calvi had been tried. For a whole week, since the criminal's appeal had been rejected by the Supreme Court, Monsieur de Granville had been worrying himself over the case, and postponing from day to day the order for carrying out the sentence, so anxious was he to reassure the jury by announcing that on the threshold of death the accused had confessed the crime.

A poor widow of Nanterre, whose dwelling stood apart from the township, which is situated in the midst of the infertile plain lying between Mont-Valérien, Saint-Germain, the hills of Sartrouville, and Argenteuil, had been murdered and robbed a few days after coming into her share of an unexpected inheritance. This windfall amounted to three thousand francs, a dozen silver spoons and forks, a gold watch and chain, and some linen. Instead of depositing the three thousand francs in Paris, as she was advised by the notary of the wine-merchant who had left it to her, the old woman insisted on keeping it by her. In the first place, she had never seen so much money of her own, and then she distrusted everybody in every kind of affairs, as most common- and country-folk do. After long discussion with a wine-merchant of Nanterre, a relation of her

own and of the wine-merchant who^d had left her the money, the widow decided on buying an annuity, on selling her house at Nanterre, and living in the town of Saint-Germain.

The house she was living in, with a good-sized garden inclosed by a slight wooden fence, was the poor sort of dwelling usually built by small landowners in the neighborhood of Paris. It had been hastily constructed, with no architectural design, of cement and rubble, the materials commonly used near Paris, where, as at Nanterre, they are extremely abundant, the ground being everywhere broken by quarries open to the sky. This is the ordinary hut of the civilized savage. The house consisted of a first floor and one floor above, with garrets in the roof.

The quarryman, her deceased husband, and the builder of this dwelling had put strong iron bars to all the windows; the front door was remarkably thick. The man knew that he^d was alone there in the open country—and what a country! His customers were the principal master-masons in Paris, so the more important materials for his house, which stood within five hundred yards of his quarry, had been brought out in his own carts returning empty. He could choose such as suited him where houses were pulled down, and got them very cheap. Thus the window-frames, the iron-work, the doors, shutters, and wooden fittings were all derived from sanctioned pilfering, presents from his customers, and good ones, carefully chosen. Of two window-frames, he could take the better.

The house, entered from a large stable-yard, was screened from the road by a wall; the gate was of strong iron-railing. Watch-dogs were kept in the stables, and a little dog indoors at night. There was a garden of more than two acres behind.

His widow, without children, lived here with only a woman servant. The sale of the quarry had paid off the owner's debts; he had been dead about two years. This isolated house was the widow's sole possession, and she kept fowls and

cows, selling the eggs and milk at Nanterre. Having no stable-boy or carter or quarrymen—her husband had made them do every kind of work—she no longer kept up the garden; she only gathered the few greens and roots that the stony ground allowed to grow self-sown.

The price of the house, with the money she had inherited, would amount to seven or eight thousand francs, and she could fancy herself living very happily at Saint-Germain on seven or eight hundred francs a year, which she thought she could buy with her eight thousand francs. She had had many discussions over this with the notary at Saint-Germain, for she refused to hand her money over for an annuity to the wine-merchant at Nanterre, who was anxious to have it.

Under these circumstances, then, after a certain day the widow Pigeau and her servant were seen no more. The front gate, the house-door, the shutters, all were closed. At the end of three days, the police, being informed, made inquiry. Monsieur Popinot, the examining judge, and the public prosecutor arrived from Paris, and this was what they reported:

Neither the outer gate nor the front door showed any marks of violence. The key was in the lock of the door, inside. Not a single bar had been wrenched; the locks, shutters, and bolts were all untampered with. The walls showed no traces that could betray the passage of the criminals. The chimney-pots, of red clay, afforded no opportunity for ingress or escape, and the roofing was sound and unbroken, showing no damage by violence.

On entering the first-floor rooms, the magistrates, the gendarmes, and Bibi-Lupin found the widow Pigeau strangled in her bed and the woman strangled in hers, each by means of the bandana she wore as a nightcap. The three thousand francs were gone, with the plate and the trinkets. The two bodies were decomposing, as were those of the little dog and of a large yard-dog.

The wooden palings of the garden were examined; none were broken. The garden-paths showed no trace of footsteps. The magistrate thought it probable that the robber had walked on the grass to leave no footprints if he had come in that way; but how could he have got into the house? The back door to the garden had an outer guard of three iron bars, uninjured; and there, too, the key was in the lock inside, as in the front door.

All these impossibilities having been duly noted by Monsieur Popinot, by Bibi-Lupin, who stayed there a day to examine every detail, by the public prosecutor himself, and by the sergeant of the gendarmerie at Nanterre, this murder became an agitating mystery, in which the Law and the police were nonplussed.

This drama, published in the "*Gazette des Tribunaux*," took place in the winter of 1828-29. God alone knows what excitement this puzzling crime occasioned in Paris! But Paris has a new drama to watch every morning, and forgets everything. The police, on the contrary, forgets nothing.

Three months after this fruitless inquiry, a girl of the town, whose extravagance had invited the attention of Bibi-Lupin's agents, who watched her as being the ally of several thieves, tried to persuade a woman she knew to pledge twelve silver spoons and forks and a gold watch and chain. The friend refused. This came to Bibi-Lupin's ears, and he remembered the plate and the watch and chain stolen at Nanterre. The commissioners of the Mont-de-Piété and all the receivers of stolen goods were warned, while Manon la Blonde was subjected to unremitting scrutiny.

It was very soon discovered that Manon la Blonde was madly in love with a young man who was never to be seen, and was supposed to be deaf to all the fair Manon's proofs of devotion. Mystery on mystery. However, this youth, under the diligent attentions of police spies, was soon seen and identified as an escaped convict, the famous hero of the Corsi-

can vendetta, the handsome Théodore Calvi, known as Madeleine.

A man was turned on to entrap Calvi, one of those double-dealing buyers of stolen goods who serve the thieves and the police both at once; he promised to purchase the silver and the watch and chain. At the moment when the dealer of the Court Saint-Guillaume was counting out the cash to Théodore, dressed as a woman, at half-past six in the evening, the police came in and seized Théodore and the property.

The inquiry was at once begun. On such thin evidence it was impossible to pass a sentence of death. Calvi never swerved, he never contradicted himself. He said that a country-woman had sold him these objects at Argenteuil; that, after buying them, the excitement over the murder committed at Nanterre had shown him the danger of keeping this plate and watch and chain in his possession, since, in fact, they were proved by the inventory made after the death of the wine-merchant, the widow Pigeau's uncle, to be those that were stolen from her. Compelled at last by poverty to sell them, he said he wished to dispose of them by the intervention of a person to whom no suspicion could attach.

And nothing else could be extracted from the convict, who, by his taciturnity and firmness, contrived to insinuate that the wine-merchant at Nanterre had committed the crime, and that the woman of whom he, Théodore, had bought them was the wine-merchant's wife. The unhappy man and his wife were both taken into custody; but, after a week's imprisonment, it was amply proved that neither the husband nor the wife had been out of their house at the time. Also, Calvi failed to recognize in the wife the woman who, as he declared, had sold him the things.

As it was shown that Calvi's mistress, implicated in the case, had spent about a thousand francs since the date of the crime and the day when Calvi tried to pledge the plate and trinkets, the evidence seemed strong enough to commit Calvi

and the girl for trial. This murder being the eighteenth which Théodore had committed, he was condemned to death, for he seemed certainly to be guilty of this skillfully contrived crime. Though he did not recognize the wine-merchant's wife, both she and her husband recognized him. The inquiry had proved, by the evidence of several witnesses, that Théodore had been living at Nanterre for about a month; he had worked at a mason's, his face whitened with plaster, and his clothes very shabby. At Nanterre the lad was supposed to be about eighteen years old, and for the whole month he must have been nursing that brat (*nourri ce poupon, i.e. hatching the crime*).

The lawyers thought he must have had accomplices. The chimney-pots were measured and compared with the size of Manon la Blonde's body to see if she could have got in that way; but a child of six could not have passed up or down those red-clay pipes, which, in modern buildings, take the place of the vast chimneys of old-fashioned houses. But for this singular and annoying difficulty, Théodore would have been executed within a week. The prison chaplain, it has been seen, could make nothing of him.

All this business, and the name of Calvi, must have escaped the notice of Jacques Collin, who, at the time, was absorbed in his single-handed struggle with Contenson, Corentin, and Peyrade. It had indeed been a point with Trompe-la-Mort to forget as far as possible his chums and all that had to do with the law courts; he dreaded a meeting which should bring him face to face with a pal who might demand an account of his boss which Collin could not possibly render.

The governor of the prison went forthwith to the public prosecutor's court, where he found the attorney-general in conversation with Monsieur de Granville, an order for the execution in his hand. Monsieur de Granville, who had spent the whole night at the Hôtel de Sérizy, was, in consequence

of this important case, obliged to give a few hours to his duties, though overwhelmed with fatigue and grief; for the physicians could not yet promise that the countess would recover her sanity.

After speaking a few words to the governor, Monsieur de Granville took the warrant from the attorney and placed it in Gault's hands.

"Let the matter proceed," said he, "unless some extraordinary circumstances should arise. Of this you must judge. I trust to your discretion. The scaffold need not be erected till half-past ten, so you still have an hour. On such an occasion hours are centuries, and many things may happen in a century. Do not allow him to think he is reprieved; prepare the man for execution if necessary; and if nothing comes of that, give Sanson the warrant at half-past nine. Let him wait!"

As the governor of the prison left the public prosecutor's room, under the archway of the passage into the hall he met Monsieur Camusot, who was going there. He exchanged a few hurried words with the examining judge; and after telling him what had been done at the Conciergerie with regard to Jacques Collin, he went on to witness the meeting of Trompela-Mort and Madeleine; and he did not allow the so-called priest to see the condemned criminal till Bibi-Lupin, admirably disguised as a gendarme, had taken the place of the prisoner left in charge of the young Corsican.

No words can describe the amazement of the three convicts when a warder came to fetch Jacques Collin and led him to the condemned cell! With one consent they rushed up to the chair on which Jacques Collin was sitting.

"To-day, isn't it, monsieur?" asked Fil-de-Soie of the warder.

"Yes, Monsieur Paris is waiting," said the man with perfect indifference.

Charlot is the name by which the executioner is known to

the populace and the prison world in Paris. The nickname dates from the Revolution of 1789.

The words produced a great sensation. The prisoners looked at each other.

"It is all over with him," the warder went on; "the warrant has been delivered to Monsieur Gault, and the sentence has just been read to him."

"And so the fair Madeleine has received the last sacraments?" said la Pouraille, and he swallowed a deep mouthful of air.

"Poor little Théodore!" cried le Biffon; "he is a pretty chap, too. What a pity to drop your nut" (*éternuer dans le son*) "so young."

The warder went toward the gate, thinking that Jacques Collin was at his heels. But the Spaniard walked very slowly, and when he was getting near to Julien he tottered and signed to la Pouraille to give him his arm.

"He is a murderer," said Napolitas to the priest, pointing to la Pouraille, and offering his own arm.

"No, to me he is an unhappy wretch!" replied Jacques Collin, with the presence of mind and the unction of the archbishop of Cambrai. And he drew away from Napolitas, of whom he had been very suspicious from the first. Then he said to his pals in an undertone—

"He is on the bottom step of the Abbaye de Mont-à-Regret, but I am the prior! I will show you how well I know how to come round the beaks. I mean to snatch this boy's nut from their jaws."

"For the sake of his breeches!" said Fil-de-Soie with a smile.

"I mean to win his soul to heaven!" replied Jacques Collin fervently, seeing some other prisoners about him. And he joined the warder at the gate.

"He got in to save Madeleine," said Fil-de-Soie. "We guessed rightly. What a boss he is!"

"But how can he? Jack Ketch's men are waiting. He will not even see the kid," objected le Biffon.

"The devil is on his side!" cried la Pouraille. "He claim our blunt! Never! He is too fond of his old chums! We are too useful to him! They wanted to make us blow the gaff, but we are not such flats! If he saves his Madeleine, I will tell him all my secrets."

The effect of this speech was to increase the devotion of the three convicts to their boss; for at this moment he was their sole hope.

Jacques Collin, in spite of Madeleine's peril, did not forget to play his part. Though he knew the Conciergerie as well as he knew the hulks in the three ports, he blundered so naturally that the warder had to tell him: "This way, that way," till they reached the office. There, at a glance, Jacques Collin recognized a tall, stout man, clothed in black, leaning on the stove, with a long, red face not without distinction: it was Sanson.

"Monsieur is the chaplain?" said he, going toward him with simple cordiality.

The mistake was so shocking that it froze the bystanders.

"No, monsieur," said Sanson; "I have other functions."

Sanson, the father of the last executioner of that name—for he has recently been dismissed—was the son of the man who beheaded Louis XVI. After four centuries of hereditary office, this descendant of so many executioners had tried to repudiate the traditional burden. The Sansons were for two hundred years executioners at Rouen before being promoted to the first rank in the kingdom, and had carried out the decrees of justice from father to son since the thirteenth century. Few families can boast of an office or of nobility handed down in a direct line during six centuries.

This young man had been captain in a cavalry regiment, and was looking forward to a brilliant military career, when his father insisted on his help in decapitating the King.

Then he made his son deputy when, in 1793, two guillotines were in constant work—one at the *Barrière du Trône*, and the other in the *Place de Grève*. This terrible functionary, now a man of about sixty, was remarkable for his dignified air, his gentle and deliberate manners, and his entire contempt for Bibi-Lupin and his acolytes who fed the machine. The only detail which betrayed the blood of the mediæval executioner was the formidable breadth and thickness of his hands. Well informed too, caring greatly for his position as a citizen and an elector, and an enthusiastic florist, this tall, brawny man with his low voice, his calm reserve, his few words, and a high bald forehead, was like an English nobleman rather than an executioner. And a Spanish priest would certainly have fallen into the mistake which Jacques Collin had intentionally made.

“He is no convict?” said the head warden to the governor.

“I begin to think so too,” replied Monsieur Gault, with a nod to that official.

Jacques Collin was led to the cellar-like room where Théodore Calvi, in a strait waistcoat, was sitting on the edge of the wretched camp-bed. Trompe-la-Mort, under a transient gleam of light from the passage, at once recognized Bibi-Lupin in the gendarme who stood leaning on his sword.

“Io sono Gaba-Morto. Parla nostro Italiano,” said Jacques Collin very rapidly. “Vengo ti salvar.” (I am Trompe-la-Mort. Talk our Italian. I have come to save you.)

All the two chums wanted to say had, of course, to be incomprehensible to the pretended gendarme; and as Bibi-Lupin was left in charge of the prisoner, he could not leave his post. The man’s fury was quite indescribable.

Théodore Calvi, a young man with a pale olive complexion, light hair, and hollow, dull, blue eyes, well built, hiding prodigious strength under the lymphatic appearance that is not uncommon in Southerners, would have had a charming face but for the strongly arched eyebrows and low forehead that



THE CORSICAN AT ONCE KNELT DOWN AND PRETENDED
TO BE ABOUT TO CONFESS.



gave him a sinister expression, scarlet lips of savage cruelty, and a twitching of the muscles peculiar to Corsicans, denoting that excessive irritability which makes them so prompt to kill in any sudden squabble.

Théodore, startled at the sound of that voice, raised his head, and at first thought himself the victim of a delusion; but as the experience of two months had accustomed him to the darkness of this stone box, he looked at the sham priest, and sighed deeply. He did not recognize Jacques Collin, whose face, scarred by the application of sulphuric acid, was not that of his old boss.

"It is really your Jacques; I am your confessor, and have come to get you off. Do not be such a ninny as to know me; and speak as if you were making a confession." He spoke with the utmost rapidity. "This young fellow is very much depressed; he is afraid to die, he will confess everything," said Jacques Collin, addressing the gendarme.

Bibi-Lupin dared not say a word for fear of being recognized.

"Say something to show me that you are he; you have nothing but his voice," said Théodore.

"You see, poor boy, he assures me that he is innocent," said Jacques Collin to Bibi-Lupin, who dared not speak.

"*Sempre mi*," said Jacques, returning close to Théodore, and speaking the word in his ear.

"*Sempre ti*," replied Théodore, giving the countersign.

"Yes, you are the boss——"

"Did you do the trick?"

"Yes."

"Tell me the whole story, that I may see what can be done to save you; make haste, Monsieur Paris is waiting."

The Corsican at once knelt down and pretended to be about to confess.

Bibi-Lupin did not know what to do, for the conversation was so rapid that it hardly took as much time as it does to

read it. Théodore hastily told all the details of the crime, of which Jacques Collin knew nothing.

"The jury gave their verdict without proof," he said finally.

"Child! you want to argue when they are waiting to cut off your hair——"

"But I might have been sent to spout the wedge. And that is the way they judge you!—and in Paris too!"

"But how did you do the job?" asked Trompe-la-Mort.

"Ah! there you are. Since I saw you I made acquaintance with a pretty girl, a Corsican; I met her when I first came to Paris."

"Men who are such fools as to love a woman," cried Jacques Collin, "always come to grief that way. They are tigers on the loose, tigers who blab and look at themselves in the glass. You were a gaby."

"But——"

"Well, what good did she do you—that curse of a moll?"

"That duck of a girl—no taller than a bundle of firewood, as slippery as an eel, and as nimble as a monkey—got in at the top of the oven, and opened the front door. The dogs were well crammed with balls, and as dead as herrings. I settled the two women. Then when I got the swag, Ginetta locked the door and got out again by the oven."

"Such a clever dodge deserves life," said Jacques Collin, admiring the execution of the crime as a sculptor admires the modeling of a figure.

"And I was fool enough to waste all that cleverness for a thousand crowns!"

"No, for a woman," replied Jacques Collin. "I tell you, they deprive us of all our wits," and Jacques Collin eyed Théodore with a flashing glance of contempt.

"But you were not there!" said the Corsican; "I was all alone——"

"And do you love the slut?" asked Jacques Collin, feeling that the reproach was a just one.

"Oh! I want to live, but it is for you now rather than for her."

"Be quite easy, I am not called Trompe-la-Mort for nothing. I undertake the case."

"What! life!" cried the lad, lifting his swaddled hands toward the damp vault of the cell.

"My little Madeleine, prepare to be lagged for life" (penal servitude), replied Jacques Collin. "You can expect no less; they won't crown you with roses like a fatted ox. When they first set us down for Rochefort, it was because they wanted to be rid of us! But if I can get you ticketed for Toulon, you can get out and come back to Pantin (Paris), where I will find you a tidy way of living."

A sigh such as had rarely been heard under that inexorable roof struck the stones, which sent back the sound that has no fellow in music, to the ear of the astounded Bibi-Lupin.

"It is the effect of the absolution I promised him in return for his revelations," said Jacques Collin to the gendarme. "These Corsicans, monsieur, are full of faith! But he is as innocent as the Immaculate Babe, and I mean to try to save him."

"God bless you, Monsieur l'Abbé!" said Théodore in French.

Trompe-la-Mort, more Carlos Herrera, more the canon than ever, left the condemned cell, rushed back to the hall, and appeared before Monsieur Gault in affected horror.

"Indeed, sir, the young man is innocent; he has told me who the guilty person is! He was ready to die for a false point of honor—he is a Corsican! Go and beg the public prosecutor to grant me five minutes' interview. Monsieur de Granville cannot refuse to listen at once to a Spanish priest who is suffering so cruelly from the blunders of the French police."

"I will go," said Monsieur Gault, to the extreme astonishment of all the witnesses of this extraordinary scene.

“And meanwhile,” said Jacques, “send me back to the prison yard where I may finish the conversion of a criminal whose heart I have touched already—they have hearts, these people !”

This speech produced a sensation in all who heard it. The gendarmes, the registry clerk, Sanson, the warders, the executioner's assistant—all awaiting orders to go and get the scaffold ready—to rig up the machine, in prison slang—all these people, usually so indifferent, were agitated by very natural curiosity.

Just then the rattle of a carriage with high-stepping horses was heard ; it stopped very suggestively at the gate of the Conciergerie on the quay. The door was opened and the step let down in such haste that every one supposed that some great personage had arrived. Presently a lady waving a sheet of blue paper came forward to the outer gate of the prison, followed by a footman and a *chasseur*. Dressed very handsomely, and all in black, with a veil over her bonnet, she was wiping her eyes with a floridly embroidered handkerchief.

Jacques Collin at once recognized Asia, or, to give the woman her true name, Jacqueline Collin, his aunt. This horrible old woman—worthy of her nephew—whose thoughts were all centred in the prisoner, and who was defending him with intelligence and mother-wit that were a match for the powers of the law, had a permit made out the evening before in the name of the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse's waiting-maid by the request of Monsieur de Sérizy, allowing her to see Lucien de Rubempré, and the Abbé Carlos Herrera so soon as he should be brought out of the secret cells. On this the colonel, who was the governor-in-chief of all the prisons, had written a few words, and the mere color of the paper revealed powerful influences ; for these permits, like theatre tickets, differ in shape and appearance.

So the turnkey hastened to open the gate, especially when

he saw the *chasseur* with his plumes and a uniform of green and gold as dazzling as a Russian general's, proclaiming a lady of aristocratic rank and almost royal birth.

"Oh, my dear abbé!" exclaimed this fine lady, shedding a torrent of tears at the sight of the priest, "how could any one ever think of putting such a saintly man in here, even by mistake?"

The governor took the permit and read: "Introduced by his excellency the Comte de Sérizy."

"Ah! Madame de San-Esteban, Madame la Marquise," cried Carlos Herrera, "what admirable devotion!"

"But, madame, such interviews are against the rules," said the good old governor. And he intercepted the advance of this bale of black watered-silk and lace.

"But at such a distance!" said Jacques Collin, "and in your presence——" and he looked round at the group.

His aunt, whose dress might well dazzle the clerk, the governor, the warders, and the gendarmes, stank of musk. She had on, beside a thousand crowns worth of lace, a black India cashmere shawl, worth six thousand francs. And her *chasseur* was marching up and down outside with the insolence of a lackey who knows that he is essential to an exacting princess. He spoke never a word to the footman, who stood by the gate on the quay, which is always open by day.

"What do you wish? What can I do?" said Madame de San-Esteban in the lingo agreed upon by this aunt and nephew.

This dialect consisted in adding terminations in *ar* or in *or*, in *al* or in *i* to every word, whether French or slang, so as to disguise it by lengthening it. It was a diplomatic cypher adapted to speech.

"Put all the letters in some safe place; take out those that are most likely to compromise the ladies; come back, dressed very poorly, to the Salle des Pas-Perdus, and wait for my orders."

Asia, otherwise Jacqueline, knelt as if to receive his blessing, and then the sham priest blessed his aunt with evangelical unction.

"*Addio, marchesa,*" said he aloud. "And," he added in their private language, "find Europe and Paccard with the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs they bagged. We must have them."

"Paccard is out there," said the pious marquise, pointing to the *chasseur*, her eyes full of tears.

This intuitive comprehension brought not merely a smile to the man's lips, but a gesture of surprise; no one could astonish him but his aunt. The sham marquise turned to the bystanders with the air of a woman accustomed to give herself airs.

"He is in despair at being unable to attend his son's funeral," said she in broken French, "for this monstrous miscarriage of justice has betrayed the saintly man's secret. I am going to the funeral mass. Here, monsieur," she added to the governor, handing him a purse of gold, "this is to give your poor prisoners some comforts."

"What tip-top style!" her nephew whispered himself in approval.

Jacques Collin then followed the warder, who led him back to the yard.

Bibi-Lupin, quite desperate, had at last caught the eye of a real gendarme, to whom, since Jacques Collin had gone, he had been addressing significant "*Ahems,*" and who took his place on guard in the condemned cell. But Trompe-la-Mort's sworn foe was released too late to see the great lady, who drove off in her dashing turn-out, and whose voice, though disguised, fell on his ear with a vicious twang.

"Three hundred shiners for the boarders," said the head warder, showing Bibi-Lupin the purse, which Monsieur Gault had handed over to his clerk.

"Let's see, Monsieur Jacomety," said Bibi-Lupin.

The police agent took the purse, poured out the money into his hand, and examined it curiously.

"Yes, it is gold, sure enough!" said he, "and a coat-of-arms on the purse! The scoundrel! How clever he is! What an all-round villain! He does us all brown—and all the time! He ought to be shot down like a dog?"

"Why, what's the matter?" asked the clerk, taking back the money.

"The matter! Why, the hussy stole it!" cried Bibi-Lupin, stamping with rage on the flags of the gateway.

The words produced a great sensation among the spectators, who were standing at a little distance from Monsieur Sanson. He, too, was still standing, his back against the large stove in the middle of the vaulted hall, awaiting the order to crop the felon's hair and erect the scaffold on the Place de Grève.

On reëntering the yard, Jacques Collin went toward his chums at a pace suited to a frequenter of the galleys.

"What have you on your mind?" said he to la Pouraille.

"My game is up," said the man, whom Jacques Collin led into a corner. "What I want now is a pal I can trust."

"What for?"

La Pouraille, after telling the tale of all his crimes, but in thieves' slang, gave an account of the murder and robbery of the two Crottats.

"You have my respect," said Jacques Collin. "The job was well done; but you seem to me to have blundered afterward."

"In what way?"

"Well, having done the trick, you ought to have had a Russian passport, have made up as a Russian prince, bought a fine coach with a coat-of-arms on it, have boldly deposited your money in a bank, have got a letter of credit on Hamburg, and then have set out posting to Hamburg with a valet, a ladies'-maid, and your mistress disguised as a Russian princess. At Hamburg you should have sailed for Mexico. A chap of

spirit, with two hundred and eighty thousand francs in gold, ought to be able to do what he pleases and go where he pleases, flathead ! ”

“ Oh, yes, you have such notions because you are the boss. Your nut is always square on your shoulders—but I——”

“ In short, a word of good advice in your position is like broth to a dead man,” said Jacques Collin, with a serpent-like gaze at his old pal.

“ True enough ! ” said la Pouraille, looking dubious. “ But give me the broth, all the same. If it does not suit my stomach, I can warm my feet in it——”

“ Here you are nabbed by the justice, with five robberies and three murders, the latest of them those of two rich and respectable folk. Now, juries do not like to see respectable people killed. You will be put through the machine, and there is not a chance for you.”

“ I have heard all that,” said la Pouraille lamentably.

“ My Aunt Jacqueline, with whom I have just exchanged a few words in the office, and who is, as you know, a mother to the pals, told me that the authorities mean to be quit of you ; they are so much afraid of you.”

“ But I am rich now,” said la Pouraille, with a simplicity which showed how convinced a thief is of his natural right to steal. “ What are they afraid of ? ”

“ We have no time for philosophizing,” said Jacques Collin. “ To come back to you——”

“ What do you want to do with me ? ” said la Pouraille, interrupting his boss.

“ You shall see. A dead dog is still worth something.”

“ To other people,” said la Pouraille.

“ I take you into my game ! ” said Jacques Collin.

“ Well, that is something,” said the murderer. “ What next ? ”

“ I do not ask you where your money is, but what you mean to do with it ? ”

La Pouraille looked into the convict's impenetrable eye, and Jacques coldly went on: "Have you a moll you are sweet upon, or a child, or a pal to be helped? I shall be outside within an hour, and I can do much for any one you want to be good-natured to."

La Pouraille still hesitated; he was delaying with indecision. Jacques Collin produced a clinching argument.

"Your whack of our money would be thirty thousand francs. Do you leave it to the pals? Do you bequeath it to anybody? Your share is safe; I can give it this evening to any one you leave it to."

The murderer gave a little start of satisfaction.

"I have him!" said Jacques Collin to himself. "But we have no time to play. Consider," he went on in la Pouraille's ear, "we have not ten minutes to spare, old chap; the public prosecutor is to send for me, and I am to have a talk with him. I have him safe, and can ring the old boss' neck. I am certain I shall save Madeleine."

"If you save Madeleine, my good boss, you can just as easily——"

"Don't waste your spittle," said Jacques Collin shortly. "Make your will."

"Well, then—I want to leave the money to la Gonore," replied la Pouraille piteously.

"What! Are you living with Moses' widow—the Jew who led the swindling gang in the South?" asked Jacques Collin.

For Trompe-la-Mort, like a great general, knew the person of every one in his army.

"That's the woman," said la Pouraille, much flattered.

"A pretty woman," said Jacques Collin, who knew exactly how to manage his dreadful tools. "The moll is a beauty; she is well informed, and stands by her chums, and is a first-rate hand. Yes, la Gonore has made a new man of you! What a flat you must be to risk your nut when you have a moll like her at home! You noodle; you should have set up some

respectable little store and lived quietly. And what does she do?"

"She is settled in the Rue Sainte-Barbe, managing a house——"

"And she is to be your legatee? Ah, my dear boy, this is what such sluts bring us to when we are such fools as to love them."

"Yes, but don't give her anything till I am done for."

"It is a sacred trust," said Jacques Collin very seriously.

"And nothing to the pals?"

"Nothing! They blowed the gaff for me," answered la Pouraille vindictively.

"Who did? Shall I serve 'em out?" asked Jacques Collin eagerly, trying to rouse the last sentiment that survives in these souls till the last hour. "Who knows, old chum, but I might at the same time do them a bad turn and serve you with the public prosecutor?"

The murderer looked at his boss with amazed satisfaction.

"At this moment," the boss replied to this expressive look, "I am playing the game only for Théodore. When this farce is played out, old boy, I might do wonders for a chum—for you are a chum of mine."

"If I see that you really can put off the engagement for that poor little Théodore, I will do anything you choose—there!"

"But the trick is done. I am sure to save his head. If you want to get out of the scrape, you see, la Pouraille, you must be ready to do a good turn—we can do nothing single-handed——"

"That's true," said the felon.

His confidence was so strong and his faith in the boss so fanatical that he no longer hesitated. La Pouraille revealed the names of his accomplices, a secret hitherto well kept. This was all Jacques needed to know.

"That is the whole story. Ruffard was the third in the job with me and Godet——"

"Arrache-Laine?" cried Jacques Collin, giving Ruffard his nickname among the gang.

"That's the man. And the blackguards peached because I knew where they had hidden their whack, and they did not know where mine was."

"You are making it all easy, my cherub!" said Jacques Collin.

"What?"

"Well," replied the master, "you see how wise it is to trust me entirely. Your revenge is now part of the hand I am playing. I do not ask you to tell me where the rivets are, you can tell me at the last moment; but tell me all about Ruffard and Godet."

"You are, and you always will be, our boss; I have no secrets from you," replied la Pouraille. "My money is in the cellar at la Gonore's."

"And you are not afraid of her telling?"

"Why, get along! She knows nothing about my little game!" replied la Pouraille. "I made her drunk, though she is of the sort that would never blab even with her head under the knife. But such a lot of gold——!"

"Yes, that turns the milk of the purest conscience," replied Jacques Collin.

"So I could do the job with no peepers to spy me. All the chickens were gone to roost. The shiners are three feet underground behind some wine-bottles. And I spread some stones and mortar over them."

"Good," said Jacques Collin. "And the others?"

"Ruffard's pieces are with la Gonore in the poor woman's bedroom, and he has her tight by that, for she might be nabbed as accessory after the fact, and end her days in Saint-Lazare."

"The villain! The reelers teach a thief what's what," said Jacques.

"Godet left his pieces at his sister's, a washerwoman;

honest girl, she may be caught for five years in La Force without dreaming of it. The pal raised the tiles of the floor, put them back again, and geyed."

"Now, do you know what I want you to do?" said Jacques Collin, with a magnetizing gaze at la Pouraille.

"What?"

"I want you to take Madeleine's job on your shoulders."

La Pouraille started queerly; but he at once recovered himself and stood at attention under the boss' eye.

"So you shy at that? You dare to spoil my game? Come, now! Four murders or three. Does it not come to the same thing?"

"Perhaps."

"By the God of good-fellowship, there is no blood in your veins! And I was thinking of saving you!"

"How?"

"Idiot, if we promise to give the money back to the family, you will only be lagged for life. I would not give a piece for your nut if we keep the blunt, but at this moment you are worth seven hundred thousand francs, you flat."

"Good for you, boss!" cried la Pouraille in great glee.

"And then," said Jacques Collin, "beside casting all the murders on Ruffard—Bibi-Lupin will be finely sold. I have him this time."

La Pouraille was speechless at this suggestion; his eyes grew round, and he stood like an image.

He had been three months in custody and was committed for trial, and his chums at La Force, to whom he had never mentioned his accomplices, had given him such small comfort that he was entirely hopeless after his examination, and this simple expedient had been quite overlooked by these prison-ridden minds. This semblance of a hope almost stupefied his brain.

"Have Ruffard and Godet had their spree yet? Have they forked out any of the yellow boys?" asked Jacques Collin.

"They dare not," replied la Pouraille. "The wretches are waiting till I am turned off. That is what my moll sent me word by la Biffe when she came to see le Biffon."

"Very well; we will have their whack of the money in twenty-four hours," said Jacques Collin. "Then the blackguards cannot pay up, as you will; you will come out as white as snow, and they will be red with all that blood! By my kind offices you will seem a good sort of fellow led away by them. I shall have money enough of yours to prove alibis on the other counts, and when you are back on the hulks—for you are bound to go there—you must see about escaping. It is a dog's life, still it is life!"

La Pouraille's eyes glittered with suppressed delirium.

"With seven hundred thousand francs you can get a good many drinks," said Jacques Collin, making his pal quite drunk with hope.

"Aye, aye, boss!"

"I can bamboozle the minister of justice. Ah, ha! Ruffard will shell out to do for a reeler. Bibi-Lupin is fairly gulled!"

"Very good, it is a bargain," said la Pouraille with savage glee. "You order, and I obey."

And he hugged Jacques Collin in his arms, while tears of joy stood in his eyes, so hopeful did he feel of saving his head.

"That is not all," said Jacques Collin; "the public prosecutor does not swallow everything, you know, especially when a new count is entered against you. The next thing is to bring a moll into a case by blowing the gaff."

"But how, and what for?"

"Do as I bid you; you will see." And Trompe-la-Mort briefly told the secret of the Nanterre murders, showing him how necessary it was to find a woman who would pretend to be Ginetta. Then he and la Pouraille, now in good spirits, went across to le Biffon.

"I know how sweet you are on la Biffe," said Jacques Collin to this man.

The expression in le Biffon's eyes was a horrible poem.

"What will she do while you are on the hulks?"

A tear sparkled in le Biffon's fierce eyes.

"Well, suppose I were to get her lodgings in the *Lorcefé des Largues*" (the women's La Force, *i. e.* les Madelonnettes or Saint-Lazare) "for a stretch, allowing that time for you to be sentenced and sent there, to arrive, and to escape?"

"Even you cannot work such a miracle. She took no part in the job," replied la Biffe's partner.

"Oh, my good Biffon," said la Pouraille, "our boss is more powerful than God A'mighty."

"What is your password for her?" asked Jacques Collin, with the assurance of a master to whom nothing can be refused.

"*Sorgue à Pantin*" (night in Paris). "If you say that she knows you have come from me, and if you want her to do as you bid her show her a five-franc piece and say *Tondif*."

"She will be involved in the sentence on la Pouraille, and let off with a year in the stone jug for *snitching*," said Jacques Collin, looking at la Pouraille.

La Pouraille understood his boss' scheme, and by a single look promised to persuade le Biffon to promote it by inducing la Biffe to take upon herself this complicity in the crime la Pouraille was prepared to confess.

"Farewell, my children. You will presently hear that I have saved my boy from Sanson," said Trompe-la-Mort. "Yes, Monsieur Paris and his hairdresser were waiting in the office to get Madeleine ready. There," he added, "they have come to fetch me to go to the public prosecutor."

And, in fact, a warder came out of the gate and beckoned to this extraordinary man, who, in face of the young Corsican's danger, had recovered the savage power which enabled him to hold his own against society.

It is worthy of note that at the moment when Lucien's body was taken away from him, Jacques Collin had, with a crowning effort, made up his mind to attempt a last incarnation, not as a human being, but as a *thing*. He had at last taken the fateful step that Napoleon took on board the boat which conveyed him to the English warship Bellerophon. And a strange concurrence of events aided this genius of evil and corruption in his undertaking.

But though the unlooked-for conclusion of this life of crime may perhaps be deprived of some of the marvelous effect which, in our day, can be given to a narrative only by incredible improbabilities, it is necessary, before we accompany Jacques Collin to the public prosecutor's room, that we should follow Madame Camusot in her visits during the time we have spent in the Conciergerie.

One of the obligations which the historian of manners must unfailingly observe is that of never marring the truth for the sake of dramatic arrangement, especially when the truth is so kind as to be in itself romantic. Social nature, particularly in Paris, allows of such freaks of chance, such complications of whimsical entanglements, that it constantly outdoes the most inventive imagination. The audacity of facts, by sheer improbability or indecorum, rises to heights of "situation" forbidden to art, unless they are softened, cleansed, and purified by the writer.

Madame Camusot did her utmost to dress herself for the morning almost in good taste—a difficult task for the wife of a judge who for six years has lived in a provincial town. Her object was to give no hold for criticism to the Marquise d'Espard or the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, in a call so early as between eight and nine in the morning. Amélie-Cécile Camusot, *née* Thirion, it must be said, only half succeeded; and in a matter of dress is not this a twofold blunder?

Few people can imagine how useful the women of Paris are to ambitious men of every class; they are equally necessary

in the world of fashion and the world of thieves, where, as we have seen, they fill a most important part. For instance, suppose that a man, not to find himself left in the lurch, must absolutely get speech within a given time with the high functionary who was of such immense importance under the Restoration, and who is to this day called the keeper of the seals—a man, let us say, in the most favorable position, a judge—that is to say, a man familiar with the way of things. He is compelled to seek out the presiding judge of a circuit, or some private or official secretary, and prove to him his need of an immediate interview. But is a keeper of the seals ever visible “that very minute?” In the middle of the day, if he is not at the Chamber, he is at the Privy Council, or signing papers, or hearing a case. In the early morning he is out, no one knows where. In the evening he has public and private engagements. If every magistrate could claim a moment’s interview under any pretext that might occur to him, the Supreme Judge would be besieged.

The purpose of a private and immediate interview is therefore submitted to the judgment of one of those mediatory potentates who are but an obstacle to be removed, a door that can be unlocked, so long as it is not held by a rival. A woman at once goes to another woman; she can get straight into her bedroom if she can arouse the curiosity of mistress or maid, especially if the mistress is under the stress of a strong interest or pressing necessity.

Call this female potentate Madame la Marquise d’Espard, with whom a minister has to come to terms; this woman writes a little scented note, which her manservant carries to the minister’s manservant. The note greets the minister on his waking, and he reads it at once. Though the minister has business to attend, the man is enchanted to have a reason for calling on one of the Queens of Paris, one of the powers of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, one of the favorites of the Dauphiness, of MADAME, or of the King. Casimir Périer,

the only real statesman of the Revolution of July, would leave anything to call on a retired gentleman of the bed-chamber to King Charles X.

This theory accounts for the magical effect of the words—

“Madame—Madame Camusot, on very important business, which she says you know of,” spoken in Madame d’Espard’s ear by her maid, who thought she was awake.

And the marquise desired that Amélie should be shown in at once.

The judge’s wife was attentively heard when she began with these words—

“Madame la Marquise, we have ruined ourselves by trying to avenge you——”

“How is that, my dear?” replied the marquise, looking at Madame Camusot in the dim light that fell through the half-open door. “You are vastly sweet this morning in that little bonnet. Where do you get that shape?”

“You are very kind, madame. Well, you know that Camusot’s way of examining Lucien de Rubempré drove the young man to despair, and he hanged himself in prison.”

“Oh, what will become of Madame de Sérizy?” cried the marquise, affecting ignorance, that she might hear the whole story once more.

“Alas! they say she is quite mad,” said Amélie. “If you could only persuade the lord keeper to send for my husband this minute, by special messenger, to meet him at the Palais, the minister would hear some strange mysteries, and report them, no doubt, to the King. Then Camusot’s enemies would be reduced to silence.”

“But who are Camusot’s enemies?” asked Madame d’Espard.

“The public prosecutor, and now Monsieur de Sérizy.”

“Very good, my dear,” replied Madame d’Espard, who owed to Monsieur de Granville and the Comte de Sérizy her defeat in the disgraceful proceedings by which she had tried

to have her husband treated as a lunatic, "I will protect you; I never forget either my foes or my friends."

She rang; the maid drew open the curtains, and daylight flooded the room; she asked for her desk, and the maid brought it in. The marquise hastily scrawled a few lines.

"Tell Godard to go on horseback, and carry this note to the chancellor's office. There is no reply," said she to the maid.

The woman went out of the room quickly, but, in spite of the order, remained at the door for some minutes.

"There are great mysteries going forward then?" asked Madame d'Espard. "Tell me all about it, dear child. Has Clotilde de Grandlieu put a finger in the pie?"

"You will know everything from the lord keeper, for my husband has told me nothing. He only told me he was in danger. It would be better for us that Madame de Sérizy should die than that she should remain mad."

"Poor woman!" said the marquise. "But was she not mad already?"

Women of the world, by a hundred ways of pronouncing the same phrase, illustrate to attentive hearers the infinite variety of musical modes. The soul goes out into the voice as it does into the eyes; it vibrates in light and in air—the elements acted on by the eyes and voice. By the tone she gave to the two words, "Poor woman!" the marquise betrayed the joy of satisfied hatred, the pleasure of triumph. Oh! what woes did she not wish to befall Lucien's protectress. Revenge, which nothing can assuage, which can survive the person hated, fills us with dark terrors. And Madame Camusot, though harsh herself, vindictive, and quarrelsome, was overwhelmed. She could find nothing to say, and was silent.

"Diane told me that Léontine went to the prison," Madame d'Espard went on. "The dear duchess is in despair at such a scandal, for she is so foolish as to be very fond of Madame de Sérizy; however, it is comprehensible: they both

adored that little fool Lucien at about the same time, and nothing so effectually binds or severs two women as worshipping at the same altar. And our dear friend spent two hours yesterday in Léontine's room. The poor countess, it seems, says dreadful things! I heard that it was disgusting! A woman of rank ought not to give way to such attacks. Bah! A purely physical passion. The duchess came to see me as pale as death; she really was very brave. There are monstrous things connected with this business."

"My husband will tell the keeper of the seals all he knows for his own justification, for they wanted to save Lucien, and he, Madame la Marquise, did his duty. An examining judge always has to question people in private at the time fixed by law! He had to ask the poor little wretch something, if only for form's sake, and the young fellow did not understand, and confessed things——"

"He was an impertinent fool!" said Madame d'Espard in a hard tone.

The judge's wife kept silence on hearing this sentence.

"Though we failed in the matter of the Commission in Lunacy, it was not Camusot's fault, I shall never forget that," said the marquise after a pause. "It was Lucien, Monsieur de Sérizy, Monsieur de Bauvan, and Monsieur de Granville who overthrew us. With time God will be on my side; all those people will come to grief. Be quite easy, I will send the Chevalier d'Espard to the keeper of the seals that he may desire your husband's presence immediately, if that is of any use."

"Oh! madame——"

"Listen," said the marquise. "I promise you the ribbon of the Legion of Honor at once—to-morrow. It will be a conspicuous testimonial of satisfaction with your conduct in this affair. Yes, it implies further blame on Lucien; it will prove him guilty. Men do not commonly hang themselves for the pleasure of it. Now, farewell, my pretty dear——"

Ten minutes later Madame Camusot was in the bedroom of the beautiful Diane de Maufrigneuse, who had not gone to bed till one, and at nine o'clock had not yet slept.

However insensible duchesses may be, even these women, whose hearts are of stone, cannot see a friend a victim to madness without being painfully impressed by it.

And, beside, the connection between Diane and Lucien, though at an end now eighteen months since, had left such memories with the duchess that the poor boy's disastrous end had been to her also a fearful blow. All night Diane had seen visions of the beautiful youth, so charming, so poetical, who had been so delightful a lover—painted as Léontine depicted him, with the vividness of wild delirium. She had letters from Lucien that she had kept, intoxicating letters worthy to compare with Mirabeau's to Sophie, but more literary, more elaborate, for Lucien's letters had been dictated by the most powerful of passions—Vanity. Having the most bewitching of duchesses for his mistress, and seeing her commit any folly for him—secret follies, of course—had turned Lucien's head with happiness. The lover's pride had inspired the poet. And the duchess had treasured these touching letters, as some old men keep indecent prints, for the sake of their extravagant praise of all that was least duchess-like in her nature.

"And he died in a squalid prison!" cried she to herself, putting the letters away in a panic when she heard her maid knocking gently at her door.

"Madame Camusot," said the woman, "on business of the greatest importance to you, Madame la Duchesse."

Diane sprang to her feet in terror.

"Oh!" cried she, looking at Amélie, who had assumed a duly condoling air, "I guess it all—my letters! It is about my letters. Oh! my letters, my letters!"

She sank on to a couch. She remembered now how, in the extravagance of her passion, she had answered Lucien in the

same vein, had lauded the man's poetry as he had sung the charms of the woman, and in what a strain!

"Alas, yes, madame, I have come to save what is dearer to you than life—your honor. Compose yourself and get dressed, we must go to the Duchesse de Grandlieu; happily for you, you are not the only person compromised."

"But at the Palais, yesterday, Léontine burnt, I am told, all the letters found at poor Lucien's."

"But, madame, behind Lucien there was Jacques Collin!" cried the magistrate's wife. "You always forget that horrible companionship which, beyond question, led to that charming and lamented young man's end. That Machiavelli of the galleys never loses his head! Monsieur Camusot is convinced that the wretch has in some safe hiding-place all the most compromising letters written by you ladies to his——"

"His friend," the duchess hastily put in. "You are right, my child. We must hold council at the Grandlieus. We are all concerned in this matter, and Sérizy happily will lend us his aid."

Extreme peril—as we have observed in the scenes in the Conciergerie—has a hold over the soul not less terrible than that of powerful reagents over the body. It is a mental Voltaic battery. The day, perhaps, is not far off when the process will be discovered by which feeling is chemically converted into a fluid not unlike the electric current.

The phenomena were the same in the convict and the duchess. This crushed, half-dying woman, who had not slept, who was so particular over her dressing, had recovered the strength of a lioness at bay and the presence of mind of a general under fire. Diane chose her gown and got through her dressing with the alacrity of a grisette who is her own waiting-woman. It was so astounding that the ladies'-maid stood for a moment stock-still, so greatly was she surprised to see her mistress in her chemise, not ill-pleased perhaps to let the judge's wife discern through the thin cloud of lawn a form

as white and as perfect as that of Canova's Venus. It was like a gem in a fold of tissue paper. Diane suddenly remembered where a corset had been put that fastened in front, sparing a woman in a hurry the ill-spent time and fatigue of being laced. She had arranged the lace trimming of her chemise and the fullness of the bosom by the time the maid had fetched her petticoat, and crowned the work by putting on her gown. While Amélie, at a sign from the maid, hooked the bodice behind, the woman brought out a pair of thread stockings, velvet shoes, a shawl, and a bonnet. Amélie and the maid each drew on a stocking.

"You are the loveliest creature I ever saw!" said Amélie, insidiously kissing Diane's elegant and polished knee with an eager impulse.

"Madame has not her match!" cried the maid.

"There, there, Josette, hold your tongue," replied the duchess. "Have you a carriage?" she went on, to Madame Camusot. "Then come along, my dear, we can talk on the road."

And the duchess ran down the great stairs of the Hôtel de Cadignan, putting on her gloves as she went—a thing she had never before been known to do.

"To the Hôtel de Grandlieu, and drive fast," said she to one of her men, signing to him to get up behind.

The footman hesitated—it was a hackney-coach.

"Ah! Madame la Duchesse, you never told me that the young man had letters of yours. Otherwise Camusot would have proceeded differently."

"Léontine's state so occupied my thoughts that I forgot myself entirely. The poor woman was almost crazy the day before yesterday; imagine the effect on her of this tragical termination. If you could only know, child, what a morning we went through yesterday! It is enough to make one forswear love! Yesterday Léontine and I were dragged across Paris by a horrible old woman, an old-clothes buyer, a dom-

ineering creature, to that stinking and blood-stained pigsty they call the Palace of Justice, and I said to her as I took her there: 'Is not this enough to make us fall on our knees and cry out like Madame de Nucingen, when she went through one of those awful Mediterranean storms on her way to Naples, "Dear God, save me this time, and never again——!"'

"These two days will certainly have shortened my life. What fools we are ever to write! But love prompts us; we receive pages that fire the heart through the eyes, and everything is in a blaze! Prudence deserts us—we reply——"

"But why reply when you can act?" said Madame Camusot.

"It is grand to lose one's self utterly!" cried the duchess with pride. "It is the luxury of the soul."

"Beautiful women are excusable," said Madame Camusot modestly. "They have more opportunities of falling than we have."

The duchess smiled.

"We are always too generous," said Diane de Maufrigneuse.

"I shall do just like that odious Madame d'Espard."

"And what does she do?" asked the judge's wife, very curious.

"She has written a thousand love-notes——"

"So many!" exclaimed Amélie, interrupting the duchess.

"Well, my dear, and not a word that could compromise her is to be found in any one of them."

"You would be incapable of maintaining such coldness, such caution," said Madame Camusot. "You are a woman; you are one of those angels who cannot stand out against the devil——"

"I have made a vow to write no more letters. I never in my life wrote to anybody but that unhappy Lucien. I will keep his letters to my dying day! My dear child, they are fire, and sometimes we want——"

"But if they were found!" said Amélie, with a little shocked expression.

"Oh! I should say they were part of a romance I was writing; for I have copied them all, my dear, and burnt the originals."

"Oh, madame, as a reward allow me to read them."

"Perhaps, child," said the duchess. "And then you will see that he did not write such letters as those to Léontine."

This speech was woman all the world over, of every age and every land.

Madame Camusot, like the frog in la Fontaine's fable, was ready to burst her skin with the joy of going to the Grandlieus in the society of the beautiful Diane de Maufrigneuse. This morning she would forge one of the links that are so needful to ambition. She could already hear herself addressed as Madame la Presidente. She felt the ineffable gladness of triumphing over stupendous obstacles, of which the greatest was her husband's ineptitude, as yet unrevealed, but to her well known. To win success for a second-rate man! This is to a woman—as to a king—the delight which tempts great actors when they act a bad play a hundred times over. It is the very drunkenness of egoism. It is in a way the Saturnalia of power.

Power can prove itself to itself only by the strange misapplication which leads it to crown some absurd person with the laurels of success while insulting genius—the only stronghold which power cannot touch. The knighting of Caligula's horse, an imperial farce, has been, and always will be, a favorite performance.

In a few minutes Diane and Amélie had exchanged the elegant disorder of the fair Diane's bedroom for the severe but dignified and splendid austerity of the Duchesse de Grandlieu's rooms.

She, a Portuguese and very pious, always rose at eight to attend mass at the little church of Sainte-Valère, a chapelry to Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, standing at that time on the esplanade

of the Invalides. This chapel, now destroyed, was rebuilt in the Rue de Bourgogne, pending the building of a Gothic church to be dedicated to Sainte-Clotilde.

On hearing the first words spoken in her ear by Diane de Maufrigneuse, this saintly lady went to find Monsieur de Grandlieu, and brought him back at once. The duke threw a flashing look at Madame Camusot, one of those rapid glances with which a man of the world can guess at a whole existence, or often read a soul. Amélie's dress greatly helped the duke to decipher the story of a middle-class life, from Alençon to Mantes, and from Mantes to Paris.

Oh! if only the lawyer's wife could have understood this gift in dukes, she could never have endured that politely ironical look; she saw the politeness only. Ignorance shares the privileges of fine breeding.

"This is Madame Camusot, a daughter of Thirion's—one of the Cabinet ushers," said the duchess to her husband.

The duke bowed with extreme politeness to the wife of a legal official, and his face became a little less grave.

The duke had rung for his valet, who now came in.

"Go to the Rue Saint-Honoré; take a coach. Ring at a side-door, No. 10. Tell the man who opens the door that I beg his master will come here, and, if the gentleman is at home, bring him back with you. Mention my name, that will remove all difficulties.

"And do not be gone more than a quarter of an hour in all."

Another footman, the duchess' servant, came in as soon as the other was gone.

"Go from me to the Duc de Chaulieu, and send up this card."

The duke gave him a card folded down in a particular way. When the two friends wanted to meet at once, on any urgent or confidential business which would not allow of note-writing, they used this means of communication.

Thus we see that similar customs prevail in every rank of society, and differ only in manner, civility, and small details. The world of fashion, too, has its *argot*, its slang ; but that slang is called style.

"Are you quite sure, madame, of the existence of the letters you say were written by Mademoiselle Clotilde de Grandlieu to this young man ?" said the Duc de Grandlieu.

And he cast a look at Madame Camusot as a sailor casts a sounding line.

"I have not seen them, but there is reason to fear it," replied Madame Camusot, quaking.

"My daughter can have written nothing to which we would not own !" said the duchess.

"Poor duchess !" thought Diane, with a glance at the duke that terrified him.

"What do you think, my dear little Diane ?" said the duke in a whisper, as he led her away into a recess.

"Clotilde is so crazy about Lucien, my dear friend, that she had made an assignation with him before leaving. If it had not been for little Lenoncourt, she would perhaps have gone off with him into the forest of Fontainebleau. I know that Lucien used to write letters to her which were enough to turn the brain of a saint. We are three daughters of Eve in the coils of the serpent of letter-writing."

The duke and Diane came back to the duchess and Madame Camusot, who were talking in undertones. Amélie, following the advice of the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, affected piety to win the proud lady's favor.

"We are at the mercy of a dreadful escaped convict !" said the duke, with a peculiar shrug. "This is what comes of opening one's house to people one is not absolutely sure of. Before admitting an acquaintance, one ought to know all about his fortune, his relations, all his previous history——"

This speech is the moral of my story—from the aristocratic point of view.

"That is past and over," said the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse. "Now we must think of saving that poor Madame de Sérizy, Clotilde, and me——"

"We can but wait for Henri; I have sent to him. But everything really depends on the man Gentil is gone to fetch. God grant that man may be in Paris! Madame," he added to Madame Camusot, "thank you so much for having thought of us——"

This was Madame Camusot's dismissal. The daughter of the Court usher had wit enough to understand the duke; she rose. But the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, with the enchanting grace which won her so much friendship and discretion, took Amélie by the hand as if to show her, in a way, to the duke and duchess.

"On my own account," said she, "to say nothing of her having been up before daybreak to save us all, I ask you for more than a remembrance for my little Madame Camusot. In the first place, she has already done me such service as I cannot forget; and then she is wholly devoted to our side, she and her husband. I have promised that her Camusot shall have advancement, and I beg you above everything to help him on, for my sake."

"You need no such recommendation," said the duke to Madame Camusot. "The Grandlieus always remember a service done them. The King's adherents will ere long have a chance of distinguishing themselves; they will be called upon to prove their devotion; your husband will be placed in the front——"

Madame Camusot withdrew, proud, happy, puffed up to suffocation. She reached home triumphant; she admired herself, she made light of the public prosecutor's hostility. She said to herself—

"Supposing we were to send Monsieur de Granville flying——"

It was high time for Madame Camusot to vanish. The

Duc de Chaulieu, one of the King's prime favorites, met the *bourgeoise* on the outer steps.

"Henri," said the Duc de Grandlieu when he heard his friend announced, "make haste, I beg of you, to get to the château, try to see the King—the business is this;" and he led the duke into the window-recess, where he had been talking to the airy and charming Diane.

Now and then the Duc de Chaulieu glanced in the direction of the flighty duchess, who, while talking to the pious duchess and submitting to be lectured, answered the Duc de Chaulieu's expressive looks.

"My dear child," said the Duc de Grandlieu to her at last, the "aside" being ended, "do be good! Come, now," and he took Diane's hands, "observe the proprieties of life, do not compromise yourself any more, write no letters. Letters, my dear, have caused as much private woe as public mischief. What might be excusable in a girl like Clotilde, in love for the first time, had no excuse in——"

"An old soldier who has been under fire," said Diane with a pout.

This grimace and the duchess' jest brought a smile to the face of the two much-troubled dukes, and of the pious duchess herself.

"But for four years I have never written a *billet-doux*. Are we saved?" asked Diane, who hid her curiosity under this childishness.

"Not yet," said the Duc de Chaulieu. "You have no notion how difficult it is to do an arbitrary thing. In a constitutional king it is what infidelity is in a wife: it is adultery."

"The fascinating sin," said the Duc de Grandlieu.

"Forbidden fruit!" said Diane, smiling. "Oh! how I wish I were the Government, for I have none of that fruit left—I have eaten it all."

"Oh! my dear, my dear!" said the elder duchess, "you really go too far."

The two dukes, hearing a coach stop at the door with the clatter of horses checked in full gallop, bowed to the ladies and left them, going into the Duc de Grandlieu's study, whither came the gentleman from the Rue Honoré-Chevalier—no less a man than the chief of the King's private police, the obscure but puissant Corentin.

"Go on," said the Duc de Grandlieu; "go first, Monsieur de Saint-Denis."

Corentin, surprised that the duke should have remembered him, went forward after bowing low to the two noblemen.

"Always about the same individual, or about his concerns, my dear sir," said the Duc de Grandlieu.

"But he is dead," said Corentin.

"He has left a partner," said the Duc de Chaulieu, "a very tough customer."

"The convict, Jacques Collin," replied Corentin.

"Will you speak, Ferdinand?" said the Duc de Chaulieu to his friend.

"That wretch is an object of fear," said the Duc de Grandlieu, "for he has possessed himself, so as to be able to levy blackmail, of the letters written by Madame de Sérizy and Madame de Maufrigneuse to Lucien Chardon, that man's tool. It would seem that it was a matter of system in the young man to extract passionate letters in return for his own, for I am told that Mademoiselle de Grandlieu had written some—at least, so we fear—and we cannot find out from her—she is gone abroad."

"That little young man," replied Corentin, "was incapable of so much foresight. That was a precaution due to the Abbé Carlos Herrera."

Corentin rested his elbow on the arm of the chair on which he was sitting, and his head on his hand, meditating.

"Money! The man has more than we have," said he. "Esther Gobseck served him as a bait to extract nearly two million francs from that well of gold called Nucingen. Gen-

lemen, get me full legal powers, and I will rid you of the fellow."

"And—the letters!" asked the Duc de Grandlieu.

"Listen to me, gentlemen," said Corentin, standing up, his weasel-face betraying his excitement.

He thrust his hands into the pockets of his black doeskin trousers, shaped over the shoes. This great actor in the historical drama of the day had only stopped to put on a vest and frock-coat, and had not changed his morning trousers, so well he knew how grateful great men can be for immediate action in certain cases. He walked up and down the room quite at his ease, haranguing loudly, as if he had been alone.

"He is a convict. He could be sent off to Bicêtre without trial, and put in solitary confinement, without a soul to speak to, and left there to die. But he may have given instructions to his adherents, foreseeing this possibility."

"But he was put into the secret cells," said the Duc de Grandlieu, "the moment he was taken into custody at that woman's house."

"Is there such a thing as a secret cell for such a fellow as he is?" said Corentin. "He is a match for—for me!"

"What is to be done?" said the dukes to each other by a glance.

"We can send the scoundrel back to the hulks at once—to Rochefort; he will be dead in six months! Oh! without committing any crime," he added, in reply to a gesture on the part of the Duc de Grandlieu. "What do you expect? A convict cannot hold out more than six months of a hot summer if he is made to work really hard among the marshes of the Charente. But this is of no use if our man has taken precautions with regard to the letters. If the villain has been suspicious of his foes, and that is probable, we must find out what steps he has taken. Then, if the present holder of the letters is poor, he is open to bribery. So, now, we must make Jacques Collin speak. What a duel! He will beat

me. The better plan would be to purchase these letters by exchange for another document—a letter of reprieve—and to place the man in my gang. Jacques Collin is the only man alive who is clever enough to come after me, poor Contenson and dear old Peyrade both being dead! Jacques Collin killed those two unrivaled spies on purpose, as it were, to make a place for himself. So, you see, gentlemen, you must give me a free hand. Jacques Collin is in the Conciergerie. I will go to see Monsieur de Granville in his court. Send some one you can trust to meet me there, for I must have a letter to show to Monsieur de Granville, who knows nothing of me. I will hand the letter to the president of the Council, a very impressive sponsor. You have half an hour before you, for I need half an hour to dress, that is to say, to make myself presentable to the eyes of the public prosecutor."

"Monsieur," said the Duc de Chaulieu, "I know your wonderful skill. I only ask you to say Yes or No. Will you be bound to succeed?"

"Yes, if I have full powers, and your word that I shall never be questioned about the matter. My plan is laid."

This sinister reply made the two fine gentlemen shiver. "Go on, then, monsieur," said the Duc de Chaulieu. "You can set down the charges of the case among those you are in the habit of undertaking."

Corentin bowed and went away.

Henri de Lenoncourt, for whom Fermaind de Grandlieu had a carriage brought out, went off forthwith to the King, whom he was privileged to see at all times in right of his office.

Thus all the various interests that had got entangled from the highest to the lowest ranks of society were to meet presently in Monsieur de Granville's room at the Palais, all brought together by necessity embodied in three men—Justice in Monsieur de Granville and the Family in Corentin, face to face with Jacques Collin, the terrible foe who represented social crime in its fiercest energy.

What a duel is that between justice and arbitrary wills on one side and the hulks and cunning on the other! The hulks—symbolical of that daring which throws off calculation and reflection, which avails itself of any means, which has none of the hypocrisy of high-handed justice, but is the hideous outcome of the starving stomach—the swift and blood-thirsty pretext of hunger. Is it not attack as against self-protection, theft as against property? The terrible quarrel between the social state and the natural man, fought out on the narrowest possible ground! In short, it is a terrible and vivid image of those compromises, hostile to social interests, which the representatives of authority, when they lack power, submit to with the fiercest rebels.

When Monsieur Camusot was announced, the public prosecutor signed that he should be admitted. Monsieur de Granville had foreseen this visit, and wished to come to an understanding with the examining judge as to how to wind up this business of Lucien's death. The end could no longer be that on which he had decided the day before in agreement with Camusot, before the suicide of the hapless poet.

"Sit down, Monsieur Camusot," said Monsieur de Granville, dropping into his armchair. The public prosecutor, alone with the inferior judge, made no secret of his depressed state. Camusot looked at Monsieur de Granville and observed his almost livid pallor, and such utter fatigue, such complete prostration, as betrayed greater suffering perhaps than that of the condemned man to whom the clerk had announced the rejection of his appeal. And yet that announcement, in the forms of justice, is as much as to say: "Prepare to die; your last hour has come."

"I will return later, Monsieur le Comte," said Camusot. "Though the business is pressing——"

"No, stay," replied the public prosecutor with dignity. "A magistrate, monsieur, must accept his anxieties and know

how to nide them. I was in fault if you saw any traces of agitation in me——”

Camusot bowed apologetically.

“God grant you may never know these crucial perplexities of our life. A man might sink under less ! I have just spent the night with one of my most intimate friends. I have but two friends, the Comte Octave de Bauvan and the Comte de Sérizy. We sat together, Monsieur de Sérizy, the count, and I, from six in the evening till six this morning, taking it in turns to go from the drawing-room to Madame de Sérizy’s bedside, fearing each time that we might find her dead or irremediably insane. Desplein, Bianchon, and Sinard never left the room, and she has two nurses. The count worships his wife. Imagine the night I have spent, between a woman crazy with love and a man crazy with despair. And a statesman’s despair is not like that of an idiot. Sérizy, as calm as if he were sitting in his place in council, clutched his chair to force himself to show us an unmoved countenance, while sweat stood over the brows bent by so much hard thought. Worn out by want of sleep, I dozed from five till half-past seven, and I had to be here by half-past eight to warrant an execution. Take my word for it, Monsieur Camusot, when a judge has been toiling all night in such gulfs of sorrow, feeling the heavy hand of God on all human concerns, and heaviest on noble souls, it is hard to sit down here, in front of a desk, and say in cold blood : ‘Cut off a head at four o’clock ! Destroy one of God’s creatures full of life, health, and strength !’ And yet this is my duty ! Sunk in grief myself, I must order the scaffold——

“The condemned wretch cannot know that his judge suffers anguish equal to his own. At this moment he and I, linked by a sheet of paper—I, society avenging itself ; he, the crime to be avenged—embody the same duty seen from two sides ; we are two lives joined for the moment by the sword of the law.

"Who pities the judge's deep sorrow? Who can soothe it? Our glory is to bury it in the depth of our heart. The priest with his life given to God, the soldier with a thousand deaths for his country's sake, seem to me far happier than the magistrate with his doubts and fears and appalling responsibility.

"You know who the condemned man is?" Monsieur de Granville went on. "A young man of seven-and-twenty—as handsome as he who killed himself yesterday, and as fair; condemned against all our anticipations, for the only proof against him was his concealment of the stolen goods. Though sentenced, the lad will confess nothing! For seventy days he has held out against every test, constantly declaring that he is innocent. For two months I have felt two heads on my shoulders! I would give a year of my life if he would confess, for juries need encouragement; and imagine what a blow it would be to justice if some day it should be discovered that the crime for which he is punished was committed by another.

"In Paris everything is so terribly important; the most trivial incidents in the law courts have political consequences.

"The jury, an institution regarded by the legislators of the Revolution as a source of strength, is, in fact, an instrument of social ruin, for it fails in action; it does not sufficiently protect society. The jury trifles with its functions. The class of jurymen is divided into two parties, one averse to capital punishment; the result is a total upheaval of true equality in administration of the law. Parricide, a most horrible crime, is in some departments treated with leniency, while in others a common murder, so to speak, is punished with death.* And what would happen if here in Paris, in our home district, an innocent man should be executed!"

"He is an escaped convict," said Monsieur Camusot, confidently.

"The Opposition and the press would make him a paschal

* There are in penal servitude twenty-three parricides who have been allowed the benefit of *extenuating circumstances*.

lamb!" cried Monsieur de Granville; "and the Opposition would enjoy whitewashing him, for he is a fanatical Corsican, full of his native notions, and his murders were a Vendetta. In that island you may kill your enemy, and think yourself, and be thought, a very good man.

"A thorough-paced magistrate, I tell you, is an unhappy man. They ought to live apart from all society, like the pontiffs of old. The world should never see them but at fixed hours, leaving their cells, grave, and old, and venerable, passing sentence like the high-priests of antiquity, who combined in their person the functions of judicial and sacerdotal authority. We should be accessible only in our high-seat. As it is, we are to be seen every day, amused or unhappy, like other men. We are to be found in drawing-rooms and at home, as ordinary citizens, moved by our passions; and we seem, perhaps, more grotesque than terrible."

This bitter cry, broken by pauses and interjections, and emphasized by gestures which gave it an eloquence impossible to reduce to writing, made Camusot's blood run chill.

"And I, monsieur," said he, "began yesterday my apprenticeship to the sufferings of our calling. I could have died of that young fellow's death. He misunderstood my wish to be lenient, and consequently the poor wretch committed himself."

"Ah, you ought never to have examined him!" cried Monsieur de Granville; "it is so easy to oblige by doing nothing."

"And the law, monsieur?" replied Comusot. "He had been in custody two days."

"The mischief is done," said the public prosecutor. "I have done my best to remedy what is indeed irremediable. My carriage and servants are following the poor weak poet to the grave. Sérizy has sent his too; nay, more, he accepts the duty imposed on him by the unfortunate boy, and will act as his executor. By promising this to his wife he won from

her a gleam of returning sanity. And Count Octave is attending the funeral in person."

"Well, then, Monsieur le Comte," said Camusot, "let us complete our work. We have a very dangerous man on our hands. He is Jacques Collin—and you know it as well as I do.

"The ruffian will be recognized——"

"Then we are lost!" cried Monsieur de Granville.

"He is at this moment shut up with your condemned murderer, who, on the hulks, was to him what Lucien has been in Paris—a favorite protege. Bibi-Lupin, disguised as a gendarme, is watching the interview."

"What business has the superior police to interfere?" said the public prosecutor. "He has no business to act without my orders!"

"All the Conciergerie must know that we have caught Jacques Collin. Well, I have come on purpose to tell you that this daring felon has in his possession the most compromising letters of Lucien's correspondence with Madame de Sérizy, the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, and Mademoiselle Clotilde de Grandlieu."

"Are you sure of that?" asked Monsieur de Granville, his face full of pained surprise.

"You shall hear, Monsieur le Comte, what reason I have to fear such a misfortune. When I untied the papers found in the young man's rooms, Jacques Collin gave a keen look at the parcel, and smiled with satisfaction in a way that no examining judge could misunderstand. So deep a villain as Jacques Collin takes good care not to let such a weapon slip through his fingers. What is to be said if these documents should be placed in the hands of counsel chosen by that rascal from among the foes of the government and the aristocracy! My wife, to whom the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse has shown much kindness, is gone to warn her, and by this time they must be with the Grandlieus holding council."

"But we cannot possibly try the man!" cried the public prosecutor, rising and striding up and down the room. "He must have put the papers in some safe place——"

"I know where," said Camusot.

These words finally effaced every prejudice the public prosecutor had felt against him.

"Well, then——" said Monsieur de Granville, sitting down again.

"On my way here this morning, I reflected deeply on this miserable business. Jacques Collin has an aunt—an aunt by nature, not putative—a woman concerning whom the superior police have communicated a report to the prefecture. He is this woman's pupil and idol; she is his father's sister, her name Jacqueline Collin. This wretched woman carries on a trade as wardrobe purchaser, and by the connection this business has secured her she gets hold of many family secrets. If Jacques Collin has intrusted those papers, which would be his salvation, to any one's keeping, it is to that of this creature. Have her arrested."

The public prosecutor gave Camusot a keen look, as much as to say, "This man is not such a fool as I thought him; he is still young, and does not yet know how to handle the reins of justice."

"But," Camusot went on, "in order to succeed, we must give up all the plans we laid yesterday, and I came to take your advice—your orders——"

The public prosecutor took up his paper knife and tapped it against the edge of the table with one of the tricky movements familiar to thoughtful men when they give themselves up to meditation.

"Three noble families involved!" he exclaimed. "We must not make the smallest blunder! You are right; as a first step let us act on Fouché's principle: 'Arrest!' And Jacques Collin must at once be sent back to the secret cells."

"That is to proclaim him a convict and to ruin Lucien's memory!"

"What a desperate business!" said Monsieur de Granville. "There is danger on every side."

At this instant the governor of the Conciergerie came in, not without knocking; and the private room of a public prosecutor is so well guarded that only those concerned about the courts may even knock at the door.

"Monsieur le Comte," said Monsieur Gault, "the prisoner calling himself Carlos Herrera wishes to speak with you."

"Has he had communication with anybody?" asked Monsieur de Granville.

"With all the prisoners, for he has been out in the yard since about half-past seven. And he has seen the condemned man, who would seem to have talked to him."

A speech of Camusot's, which recurred to his mind like a flash of light, showed Monsieur de Granville all the advantage that might be taken of a confession of intimacy between Jacques Collin and Théodore Calvi to obtain the letters. The public prosecutor, glad to have an excuse for postponing the execution, beckoned Monsieur Gault to his side.

"I intend," said he, "to put off the execution till to-morrow; but let no one in the prison suspect it. Absolute silence! Let the executioner seem to be superintending the preparations.

"Send the Spanish priest here under a strong guard; the Spanish embassy claims his person! Gendarmes can bring up the self-styled Carlos by your back stairs so that he may see no one. Instruct the men each to hold him by one arm, and never let him go till they reach this door.

"Are you quite sure, Monsieur Gault, that this dangerous foreigner has spoken to no one but the prisoners?"

"Ah! just as he came out of the condemned cell a lady came to see him——"

The two magistrates exchanged looks, and such looks!

"What lady was that?" asked Camusot.

"One of his penitents—a marquise," replied Gault.

"Worse and worse!" said Monsieur de Granville, looking at Camusot.

"She gave all the gendarmes and warders a sick headache," said Monsieur Gault, much puzzled.

"Nothing can be a matter of indifference in your business," said the public prosecutor. "The Conciergerie has not such tremendous walls for nothing. How did this lady get in?"

"With a regular permit, monsieur," replied the governor. "The lady, beautifully dressed, in a fine carriage with a footman and a *chasseur*, came to see her confessor before going to the funeral of the poor young man whose body you had had removed."

"Bring me the order for admission," said Monsieur de Granville.

"It was given on the recommendation of the Comte de Sérizy."

"What was the woman like?" asked the public prosecutor of Gault.

"She seemed to be a lady."

"Did you see her face?"

"She wore a black veil."

"What did they say to each other?"

"Well—a pious person, with a prayer-book in her hand—what could she say? She asked the abbé's blessing and went on her knees."

"Did they talk together a long time?"

"Not five minutes; but we none of us understood what they said; they spoke Spanish, no doubt."

"Tell us everything, monsieur," the public prosecutor insisted. "I repeat, the very smallest detail is to us of the first importance. Let this be a caution to you."

"She was crying, monsieur."

"Really weeping?"

"That we could not see, she hid her face in her handkerchief. She left three hundred francs in gold for the prisoners."

"That was not she!" said Camusot.

"Bibi-Lupin at once said, 'She is a thief!'" said Monsieur Gault.

"He knows the tribe," said Monsieur de Granville. "Get out your warrant," he added, turning to Camusot, "and have seals placed on everything in her house—at once! But how can she have got hold of Monsieur de Sérizy's recommendation? Bring me the order—and go, Monsieur Gault; send me that abbé immediately. So long as we have him safe, the danger cannot be greater. And in the course of two hours' talk you get a long way down into a man's mind."

"Especially such a public prosecutor as you are," said Camusot insidiously.

"There will be two of us," replied Monsieur de Granville politely.

And he became discursive once more.

"There ought to be created, for every prison parlor, a post of superintendent, to be given with a good salary to the cleverest and most energetic police officers," said he, after a long pause. "Bibi-Lupin ought to end his days in such a place. Then we should have an eye and an ear on the watch in a department that needs closer supervision than it gets. Monsieur Gault could tell us nothing positive."

"He has so much to do," said Camusot. "Still, between these secret cells and us there lies a gap which ought not to exist. On the way from the Conciergerie to the judges' rooms there are passages, courtyards, and stairs. The attention of the agents cannot be unflagging, whereas the prisoner is always alive to his own affairs.

"I was told that a lady had already placed herself in the way of Jacques Collin when he was brought up from the cells to be examined. That woman got into the guard-room at the

top of the narrow stairs from the mousetrap; the ushers told me, and I blamed the gendarmes."

"Oh! the Palais needs entire reconstruction," said Monsieur de Granville. "But it is an outlay of twenty to thirty million francs! Just try asking the Chambers for thirty millions for the more decent accommodation of Justice."

The sound of many footsteps and a clatter of arms fell on the ear. It would be Jacques Collin.

The public prosecutor assumed a mask of gravity that hid the man. Camusot imitated his chief.

The office-boy opened the door, and Jacques Collin came in, quite calm and unmoved.

"You wished to speak to me," said Monsieur de Granville. "I am ready to listen."

"Monsieur le Comte, I am Jacques Collin. I surrender!"

Camusot started; the public prosecutor was immovable.

"As you may suppose, I have my reasons for doing this," said Jacques Collin, with an ironical glance at the two magistrates. "I must inconvenience you greatly; for, if I had remained a Spanish priest, you would simply have packed me off with an escort of gendarmes as far as the frontier by Bayonne, and there Spanish bayonets would have relieved you of me."

The lawyers sat silent and imperturbable.

"Monsieur le Comte," the convict went on, "the reasons which have led me to this step are yet more pressing than this, but devilish personal to myself. I can tell them to no one but you. If you are afraid——"

"Afraid of whom? Of what?" said the Comte de Granville.

In attitude and expression, in the turn of his head, his demeanor and his look, this distinguished judge was at this moment a living embodiment of the law which ought to supply us with the noblest examples of civic courage. In this brief instant he was on a level with the magistrates of the old

French Parlement in the time of the civil wars, when the presidents found themselves face to face with death, and stood, made of marble, like the statues that commemorate them.

"Afraid to be alone with an escaped convict?"

"Leave us, Monsieur Camusot," said the public prosecutor at once.

"I was about to suggest that you should bind me hand and foot," Jacques Collin coolly added, with an ominous glare at the two gentlemen. He paused, and then said with great gravity—

"Monsieur le Comte, you had my esteem, but you now command my admiration."

"Then you think you are formidable?" said the magistrate, with a look of supreme contempt.

"*Think* myself formidable?" retorted the convict. "Why think about it? I am, and I know it."

Jacques Collin took a chair and sat down, with all the ease of a man who feels himself a match for his adversary in an interview where they would treat on equal terms.

At this instant Monsieur Camusot, who was on the point of closing the door behind him, turned back, came up to Monsieur de Granville, and handed him two folded papers.

"Look!" said he to Monsieur de Granville, pointing to one of them.

"Call back Monsieur Gault!" cried the Comte de Granville, as he read the name of Madame de Maufrigneuse's maid—a woman he knew.

The governor of the prison came in.

"Describe the woman who came to see the prisoner," said the public prosecutor in his ear.

"Short, thick-set, fat, and square," replied Monsieur Gault.

"The woman to whom this permit was given is tall and thin," said Monsieur de Granville. "How old was she?"

"About sixty."

"This concerns me, gentlemen?" said Jacques Collin.

"Come, do not puzzle your heads. That person is my aunt, a very plausible aunt, a woman, and an old woman. I can save you a great deal of trouble. You will never find my aunt unless I choose. If we beat about the bush, we shall never get forwarder."

"Monsieur l'Abbé has lost his Spanish accent," observed Monsieur Gault; "he does not speak broken French."

"Because things are in a desperate mess, my dear Monsieur Gault," replied Jacques Collin with a bitter smile, as he addressed the governor by name.

Monsieur Gault went quickly up to his chief, and said in a whisper: "Beware of that man, Monsieur le Comte; he is mad with rage."

Monsieur de Granville gazed slowly at Jacques Collin, and saw that he was controlling himself; but he saw, too, that what the governor said was true. This treacherous demeanor covered the cold but terrible nervous irritation of a savage. In Jacques Collin's eyes were the lurid fires of a volcanic eruption, his fists were clenched. He was a tiger gathering himself up to spring.

"Leave us," said the count gravely to the prison governor and the judge.

"You did wisely to send away Lucien's murderer!" said Jacques Collin, without caring whether Camusot heard it or not; "I could not contain myself, I should have strangled him."

Monsieur de Granville felt a chill; never had he seen a man's eyes so full of blood, or cheeks so colorless, or muscles so set.

"And what good would that murder have done you?" he quietly asked.

"You avenge society, or fancy you avenge it, every day, monsieur, and you ask me to give a reason for revenge? Have you never felt vengeance throbbing in surges in your veins? Don't you know that it was that idiot of a judge who

killed him? For you were fond of my Lucien, and he loved you! I know you by heart, sir. The dear boy would tell me everything at night when he came in; I used to put him to bed as a nurse tucks up a child, and I made him tell me everything. He confided everything to me, even his least sensations!

“The best of mothers never loved an only son so tenderly as I loved that angel! If only you knew! All that is good sprang up in his heart as flowers grow in the fields. He was weak; it was his only fault, weak as the string of a lyre, which is so strong when it is taut. These are the most beautiful natures; their weakness is simply tenderness, admiration, the power of expanding in the sunshine of art, of love, of the beauty God has made for man in a thousand shapes! In short, Lucien was a woman spoiled. Oh! what could I not say to that brute beast who has just gone out of the room!

“I tell you, monsieur, in my degree, as a prisoner before his judge, I did what God A'mighty would have done for His Son if, hoping to save Him, He had gone with Him before Pilate!”

A flood of tears fell from the convict's light tawny eyes, which just now had glared like those of a wolf starved by six months' snow in the plains of the Ukraine. He went on—

“That dolt would listen to nothing, and he killed the boy! I tell you, sir, I bathed the child's corpse in my tears, crying out to the Power I do not know, and which is above us all! I who do not believe in God!—(For if I were not a materialist, I should not be myself.)

“I have told everything when I say that. You don't know—no man knows what suffering is. I alone know it. The fire of anguish so dried up my tears, that all last night I could not weep. Now I can, because I feel that you can understand me. I saw you, sitting there just now, an image of Justice. Oh! monsieur, may God—for I am beginning to believe in Him—preserve you from ever being so bereft as I

am ! That cursed judge has robbed me of my soul, Monsieur le Comte ! At this moment they are burying my life, my beauty, my virtue, my conscience, all my powers ? Imagine a dog from which a chemist has extracted the blood ! That's me ! I am that dog——

“And that is why I have come to tell you that I am Jacques Collin, and to give myself up. I made up my mind to it this morning when they came and carried away the body I was kissing like a madman—like a mother—as the Virgin must have kissed Jesus in the tomb.

“I meant then to give myself up to justice without driving any bargain ; but now I must make one, and you shall know why.”

“Are you speaking to the judge or to Monsieur de Granville ?” asked the magistrate.

The two men, Crime and Law, looked at each other. The magistrate had been strongly moved by the convict ; he felt a sort of divine pity for the unhappy wretch ; he understood what his life and feelings were. And, beside, the magistrate—for a magistrate is always a magistrate—knowing nothing of Jacques Collin's career since his escape from prison, fancied that he could impress the criminal who, after all, had only been sentenced for forgery. He would try the effect of generosity on this nature, a compound, like bronze, of various elements, of good and evil.

Again, Monsieur de Granville, who had reached the age of fifty-three without ever having been loved, admired a tender soul, as all men do who have not been beloved. This despair, the lot of many men to whom women can only give esteem and friendship, was perhaps the unknown bond on which the strong intimacy was based that united the Comtes de Bauvan, de Granville, and de Sérizy ; for a common misfortune brings souls into unison quite as much as a common joy.

“You have the future before you,” said the public prosecutor, with an inquisitorial glance at the dejected villain.

The man only expressed by a shrug the utmost indifference to his fate.

"Lucien made a will by which he leaves you three hundred thousand francs."

"Poor, poor chap! poor boy!" cried Jacques Collin. "Always too honest! I was all wickedness, while he was goodness—noble, beautiful, sublime! Such lovely souls cannot be spoiled. He had taken nothing from me but my money, sir."

This utter and complete surrender of his individuality, which the magistrate vainly strove to rally, so thoroughly proved his dreadful words, that Monsieur de Granville was completely won over to the criminal. The public prosecutor remained!

"If you really care for nothing," said Monsieur de Granville, "what did you want to say to me?"

"Well, is it not something that I have given myself up? You were getting warm, but you had not got me; beside, you would not have known what to do with me——"

"What an antagonist!" said the magistrate to himself.

"Monsieur le Comte, you are about to cut off the head of an innocent man, and I have discovered the culprit," said Jacques Collin, wiping away his tears. "I have come here not for their sakes, but for yours. I have come to spare you remorse, for I love all who took an interest in Lucien, just as I will give my hatred full play against all who helped to cut off his life—men or women!"

"What can a convict more or less matter to me?" he went on, after a short pause. "A convict is no more in my eyes than an emmet is in yours. I am like the Italian brigands—fine men they are! If a traveler is worth ever so little more than the charge in their musket, they shoot him dead.

"I thought only of you. I got the young man to make a clean breast of it; he was bound to trust me, we had been

chained together. Théodore is very good stuff ; he thought he was doing his mistress a good turn by undertaking to sell or pawn the stolen goods ; but he is no more guilty of the Nanterre job than you are. He is a Corsican ; it is their way to revenge themselves and kill each other like flies. In Italy and Spain a man's life is not respected, and the reason is plain. There we are believed to have a soul in our own image, which survives us and lives for ever. Tell that to your analyst ! It is only among atheistical or philosophical nations that those who mar human life are made to pay so dearly ; and with reason from their point of view—a belief only in matter and in the present.

“If Calvi had told you who the woman was from whom he obtained the stolen goods, you would not have found the real murderer ; he is already in your hands ; but his accomplice, whom poor Théodore will not betray because she is a woman—— Well, every calling has its point of honor ; convicts and thieves have theirs !

“Now, I know the murderer of those two women and the inventors of that bold, strange plot ; I have been told every detail. Postpone Calvi's execution, and you shall know all ; but you must give me your word that he shall be sent safe back to the hulks and his punishment commuted. A man so miserable as I am does not take the trouble to lie—you know that. What I have told you is the truth.”

“To you, Jacques Collin, though it is degrading Justice, which ought never to condescend to such a compromise, I believe I may relax the rigidity of my office and refer the case to my superiors.”

“Will you grant me this life ?”

“Possibly.”

“Monsieur, I implore you to give me your word ; it will be enough.”

Monsieur Granville drew himself up with offended pride.

“I hold in my hand the honor of three families, and you

only the lives of three convicts in yours," said Jacques Collin. "I have the stronger hand."

"But you may be sent back to the dark cells: then, what will you do?" said the public prosecutor.

"Oh! we are to play the game out then!" said Jacques Collin. "I was speaking as man to man—I was talking to Monsieur de Granville. But if the public prosecutor is my adversary, I take up the cards and hold them close. And if only you had given me your word, I was ready to give you back the letters that Mademoiselle Clotilde de Grandlieu——"

This was said with a tone, an audacity, and a look which showed Monsieur de Granville that against such an adversary the least blunder was dangerous.

"And is that all you ask?" said the magistrate.

"I will speak for myself now," said Jacques. "The honor of the Grandlieu family is to pay for the commutation of Théodore's sentence. It is giving much to get very little. For what is a convict in penal servitude for life? If he escapes, you can so easily settle the score. It is drawing a bill on the guillotine! Only, as he was consigned to Rochefort with no amiable intentions, you must promise me that he shall be quartered at Toulon, where he will have a chance, and well treated there.

"Now, for myself, I want something more. I have the packets of letters from Madame de Sérizy and Madame de Maufrigneuse. And what letters! I tell you, Monsieur le Comte, prostitutes, when they write letters, assume a style of sentiment; well, sir, fine ladies, who are accustomed to style and sentiment all day long, write as prostitutes behave. Philosophers may know the reasons for this contrariness. I do not care to seek them. Woman is an inferior animal; she is ruled by her instincts. To my mind, a woman has no beauty who is not like a man.

"So your smart duchesses, who are men in brains only,

write masterpieces. Oh ! they are splendid from beginning to end, like Piron's famous ode !——”

“Indeed !”

“Would you like to see them ?” said Jacques Collin, with a laugh.

The magistrate felt ashamed.

“I cannot give them you to read. But, there ; no nonsense ; this is business and all above board, I suppose ? You must give me back the letters, and allow no one to play the spy or to follow or watch the person who will bring them to me.”

“That will take time,” said Monsieur de Granville.

“No. It is half-past nine,” replied Jacques Collin, looking at the clock ; “well, in four minutes you will have a letter from each of these ladies, and after reading them you will countermand the guillotine. If matters were not as they are, you would not see me taking things so easy. The ladies indeed have had warning.” Monsieur de Granville was startled. “They must be making a stir by now ; they are going to bring the keeper of the seals into the fray—they may even appeal to the King, who knows ? Come, now, will you give me your word that you will forget all that has passed, and neither follow, nor send any one to follow, that person for a whole hour ?”

“I promise it.”

“Very well ; you are not the man to deceive an escaped convict. You are a chip of the block of which Turennes and Condés are made, and would keep your word to a thief. In the Salle des Pas-Perdus there is at this moment a beggar-woman in rags, an old woman, in the very middle of the hall. She is probably gossiping with one of the public writers, about some lawsuit over a party-wall perhaps ; send your office messenger to fetch her, saying these words : ‘*Dabor ti Mandana*’ (the boss wants you). She will come.

“But do not be unnecessarily cruel. Either you accept

my terms or you do not choose to be mixed up in a business with a convict. I am only a forger, you will remember ! Well, do not leave Calvi to go through the terrors of preparation for the scaffold."

"I have already countermanded the execution," said Monsieur de Granville to Jacques Collin. "I would not have Justice beneath you in dignity."

Jacques Collin looked at the public prosecutor with a sort of amazement, and saw him ring his bell.

"Will you promise not to escape? Give me your word, and I shall be satisfied. Go and fetch the woman."

The office-boy came in.

"Felix, send away the gendarmes," said Monsieur de Granville.

Jacques Collin was conquered.

In this duel with the magistrate he had tried to be the superior, the stronger, the more magnanimous, and the magistrate had crushed him. At the same time, the convict felt himself the superior, inasmuch as he had tricked the Law; he had convinced it that the guilty man was innocent, and had fought for a man's head and won it; but this advantage must be unconfessed, secret and hidden, while the magistrate towered above him majestically in the eye of day.

As Jacques Collin left Monsieur de Granville's room, the Comte des Lupeaulx, secretary-in-chief of the president of the Council, and a deputy, made his appearance, and with him a feeble-looking, little old man. This individual, wrapped in a puce-colored overcoat, as though it were still winter, with powdered hair, and a cold, pale face, had a gouty gait, unsteady on feet that were shod with loose calf-skin shoes; leaning on a gold-headed cane, he carried his hat in his hand, and wore a row of seven orders in his button-hole.

"What is it, my dear des Lupeaulx?" asked the public prosecutor.

"I come from the prince," replied the count, in a low voice. "You have *carte blanche* if you can only get the letters—Madame de Sérizy's, Madame de Maufrigneuse's, and Mademoiselle Clotilde de Grandlieu's. You may come to some arrangement with this gentleman——"

"Who is he?" asked Monsieur de Granville, in a whisper.

"There are no secrets between you and me, my dear sir," said des Lupeaulx. "This is the famous Corentin. His majesty desires that you will yourself tell him all the details of this affair and the conditions of success."

"Do me the kindness," replied the public prosecutor, "of going to tell the prince that the matter is settled, that I have not needed this gentleman's assistance," and he turned to Corentin. "I will wait on his majesty for his commands with regard to the last steps in the matter, which will lie with the keeper of the seals, as two reprieves will need signing."

"You have been wise to take the initiative," said des Lupeaulx, shaking hands with the Comte de Granville. "On the very eve of a great undertaking the King is most anxious that the peers and the great families should not be shown up, blown upon. It ceases to be a low criminal case; it becomes an affair of State."

"But tell the prince that by the time you came it was all settled."

"Really?"

"I believe so."

"Then you, my dear fellow, will be keeper of the seals as soon as the present keeper is made chancellor——"

"I have no ambition," replied the magistrate.

Des Lupeaulx laughed, and went away.

"Beg of the prince to request the King to grant me ten minutes' audience at about half-past two," added Monsieur de Granville, as he accompanied the Comte des Lupeaulx to the door.

"So you are not ambitious!" said des Lupeaulx, with a

keen look at Monsieur de Granville. "Come, you have two children, you would like at least to be made peer of France."

"If you have the letters, Monsieur le Procureur-General, my intervention is unnecessary," said Corentin, finding himself alone with Monsieur de Granville, who looked at him with very natural curiosity.

"Such a man as you can never be superfluous in so delicate a case," replied the magistrate, seeing that Corentin had heard or guessed everything.

Corentin bowed with a patronizing air.

"Do you know the man in question, monsieur?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Comte, it is Jacques Collin, the head of the 'Ten Thousand Francs Association,' the banker for three penal settlements, a convict who, for the last five years, has succeeded in concealing himself under the robe of the Abbé Carlos Herrera. How he ever came to be intrusted with a mission to the late King from the King of Spain is a question which we have all puzzled ourselves with trying to answer. I am now expecting information from Madrid, whither I have sent notes and a man. That convict holds the secrets of two kings."

"He is a man of mettle and temper. We have only two courses open to us," said the public prosecutor. "We must secure his fidelity, or get him out of the way."

"The same idea has struck us both, and that is a great honor for me," said Corentin. "I am obliged to have so many ideas, and for so many people, that out of them all I ought occasionally to meet a clever man."

He spoke so drily, and in so icy a tone, that Monsieur de Granville made no reply, and proceeded to attend to some pressing matters.

Mademoiselle Jacqueline Collin's amazement on seeing Jacques Collin in the Salle des Pas-Perdus is beyond imagining. She stood square on her feet, her hands on her hips, for

she was dressed as a costermonger. Accustomed as she was to her nephew's conjuring tricks, this beat everything.

"Well, if you are going to stare at me as if I were a wild-beast show," said Jacques Collin, taking his aunt by the arm and leading her out of the hall, "we shall be taken for a pair of curious specimens; they may take us into custody, and then we should lose time."

And he went down the stairs of the *Galerie Marchande* leading to the *Rue de la Barillerie*. "Where is Paccard?"

"He is waiting for me at *La Rousse's*, walking up and down the flower market."

"And Prudence?"

"Also at her house, as my god-daughter."

"Let us go there."

"Look round and see if we are watched."

La Rousse, a hardware dealer living on the *Quai aux fleurs*, was the widow of a famous murderer, one of the "Ten Thousand." In 1819, Jacques Collin had faithfully handed over twenty thousand francs and odd to this woman from her lover, after he had been executed. *Trompe-la-Mort* was the only person who knew of his pal's connection with the girl, at that time a milliner.

"I am your young man's boss," the boarder at *Madame Vauquer's* had told her, having sent for her to meet him at the *Jardin des Plantes*. "He may have mentioned me to you, my dear. Any one who plays me false dies within a year; on the other hand, those who are true to me have nothing to fear from me. I am stanch through thick and thin, and would die without saying a word that would compromise anybody I wish well. Stick to me as the devil sticks to a soul, and you will find the benefit of it. I promised your poor Auguste that you should be happy; he wanted to make you a rich woman, and he got scragged for your sake.

"Don't cry; listen to me. No one in the world knows that you were mistress to a convict, to the murderer they

shaved close last Saturday ; and I shall never tell. You are two-and-twenty, and pretty, and you have twenty-six thousand francs of your own ; forget Auguste and get married ; be an honest woman if you can. In return for peace and quiet, I only ask you to serve me now and then, me, and any one I may send to you, but without stopping to think. I will never ask you to do anything that can get you into trouble, you or your children, or your husband, if you get one, or your family.

“ In my line of life I often need a safe place to talk in or in which to hide. Or I may want a trusty woman to carry a letter or do an errand. You will be one of my letter-boxes, one of my porters’ lodges, one of my messengers, neither more nor less.

“ You are too red-haired ; Auguste and I used to call you *la Rousse* ; you can keep that name. My aunt, an old-clothes dealer at the Temple, who will come and see you, is the only person in the world you are to obey ; tell her everything that happens to you ; she will find you a husband, and be very useful to you.”

And thus the bargain was struck, a diabolical compact like that which had for so long bound Prudence Servien to Jacques Collin, and which the man never failed to tighten ; for, like the devil, he had a passion for recruiting.

In about 1821 Jacques Collin found *la Rousse* a husband in the person of the chief clerk under a rich, wholesale tin merchant. This head-clerk, having purchased his master’s house of business, was now a prosperous man, the father of two children, and one of the district *maire’s* deputies. *La Rousse*, now *Madame Prélard*, had never had the smallest ground for complaint, either of Jacques Collin or of his aunt ; still, each time she was required to help them, *Madame Prélard* quaked in every limb. So, as she saw the terrible couple come into her store, she turned as pale as death.

“ We want to speak to you on business, madame,” said Jacques Collin.

"My husband is in there," said she.

"Very well ; we have no immediate need of you. I never put people out of their way for nothing."

"Send for a hackney-coach, my dear," said Jacqueline Collin, "and tell my god-daughter to come down. I hope to place her as maid to a very great lady, and the steward of the house will take us there."

An errand boy fetched the coach, and a few minutes later Europe, or, to be rid of the name under which she had served Esther, Prudence Servien, Paccard, Jacques Collin, and his aunt were, to la Rousse's great joy, packed into a coach, ordered by Trompe-la-Mort to drive to the Barrière d'Ivry.

Prudence and Paccard, quaking in presence of the boss, felt like guilty souls in the presence of God.

"Where are the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs?" asked the boss, looking at them with the clear, penetrating gaze which so effectually curdled the blood of these tools of his, these *âmes damnées*, when they were caught tripping, that they felt as though their scalp were set with as many pins as hairs.

"The seven hundred and *thirty* thousand francs," said Jacqueline Collin to her nephew, "are quite safe ; I gave them to la Romette this morning in a sealed packet."

"If you had not handed them over to Jacqueline," said Trompe-la-Mort, "you would have gone straight there," and he pointed to the Place de Grève, which they were just passing.

Prudence Servien, in her country fashion, made the sign of the cross, as if she had seen a thunderbolt fall.

"I forgive you," said the boss, "on condition of your committing no more mistakes of this kind, and of your being henceforth to me what these two fingers are of my right hand," and he pointed to the first and middle fingers, "for this good woman is the thumb," and he slapped his aunt on the shoulder.

"Listen to me," he went on. "You, Paccard, have nothing more to fear ; you may follow your nose about *Pantin*

(Paris) as you please. I give you leave to marry Prudence Servien."

Paccard took Jacques Collin's hand and kissed it respectfully.

"And what must I do?" said he.

"Nothing; and you will have dividends and women, to say nothing of your wife—for you have a touch of the Regency about you, old boy! That comes of being such a fine man!"

Paccard colored under his Sultan's ironical praises.

"You, Prudence," Jacques went on, "will want a career, a position, a future; you must remain in my service. Listen to me. There is a very good house in the Rue Sainte-Barbe belonging to that Madame de Saint-Estève, whose name my aunt occasionally borrows. It is a very good business, with plenty of custom, bringing in fifteen to twenty thousand francs a year. Saint-Estève puts a woman in to keep the store——"

"La Gonore," said Jacqueline.

"Poor la Pouraille's moll," said Paccard. "That is where I bolted to with Europe the day that poor Madame Van Bogseck died, our mis'ess."

"Who jabbars when I am speaking?" said Jacques Collin.

Perfect silence fell in the coach. Paccard and Prudence did not dare look at each other.

"The store is kept by la Gonore," Jacques Collin went on. "If that is where you went to hide with Prudence, I see, Paccard, that you have wit enough to dodge the reelers (mislead the police), but not enough to puzzle the old lady," and he stroked his aunt's chin. "Now I see how she managed to find you. It all fits beautifully. You may go back to la Gonore. To go on: Jacqueline will arrange with Madame Nourrisson to purchase her business in the Rue Sainte-Barbe; and if you manage well, child, you may make a fortune out of it," he said to Prudence. "An abbess at your age! It is worthy of a Daughter of France," he added in a hard tone.

Prudence flung her arms round Trompe-la-Mort's neck and

hugged him; but the boss flung her off with a sharp blow, showing his extraordinary strength, and, but for Paccard, the girl's head would have struck and broken the coach window.

"Paws off! I don't like such ways," said the boss stiffly. "It is disrespectful to me."

"He is right, child," said Paccard. "Why, you see, it is as though the boss had made you a present of a hundred thousand francs. The store is worth that. It is on the boulevard, opposite the Gymnase. The people come out of the theatre there——"

"I will do more," said Trompe-la-Mort; "I will buy the house."

"And in six years we shall be millionaires," cried the half-jolly Paccard.

Tired of being interrupted, Trompe-la-Mort gave Paccard's shin a kick hard enough to break it; but the man's tendons were of india-rubber and his bones of wrought iron.

"All right, boss, mum it is," said he.

"Do you think I am cramming you with lies?" said Jacques Collin, perceiving that Paccard had had a few drops too much. "Well, listen. In the cellar of that house there are two hundred and fifty thousand francs in gold——"

Again silence reigned in the coach.

"The coin is in a very hard bed of masonry. It must be got out, and you have only three nights to do it in. Jacqueline will help you. A hundred thousand francs will buy up the business, fifty thousand will pay for the house, leave the remainder."

"Where?" said Paccard.

"In the cellar?" asked Prudence.

"Silence!" cried Jacqueline.

"Yes, but to get the business transferred, we must have the consent of the police authorities," Paccard objected.

"We shall have it," said Trompe-la-Mort. "Don't meddle in what does not concern you."

Jacqueline looked at her nephew, and was struck by the alteration in his face, visible through the stern mask under which the strong man generally hid his feelings.

"You, child," said he to Prudence Servien, "will receive from my aunt the seven hundred and fifty thousand francs that——"

"Seven hundred and thirty," said Paccard.

"Very good, seven hundred and thirty then," said Jacques Collin. "You must return this evening under some pretext to Madame Lucien's house. Get out on the roof through the skylight; get down the chimney into your mis'ess' room, and hide the packet she had made of the money in the mattress under——"

"And why not by the door?" asked Prudence Servien.

"Idiot! there are seals on everything," replied Jacques Collin. "In a few days the inventory will be taken, and you will be innocent of the theft."

"Good for the boss!" cried Paccard. "That is really kind!"

"Stop, coachman!" said Jacques Collin's powerful voice.

The coach was close to the stand by the Jardin des Plantes.

"Be off, young 'uns," said Jacques Collins, "and do nothing silly! Be on the Pont des Arts this afternoon at five, and my aunt will let you know if there are any orders to the contrary. We must be prepared for everything," he whispered to his aunt. "To-morrow," he went on, "Jacqueline will tell you how to dig up the gold without any risk. It is a ticklish job——"

Paccard and Prudence jumped out on to the King's highway, as happy as reprieved thieves.

"What a good fellow the boss is!" said Paccard.

"He would be the king of men if he were not so rough on women."

"Oh yes! He is a sweet creature," said Paccard. "Did

you see how he kicked me? Well, we deserved to be sent to Old Nick; for, after all, we got him into this scrape."

"If only he does not drag us into some dirty job, and get us packed off to the hulks yet," said the wily Prudence.

"Not he! If he had that in his head, he would tell us; you don't know him. He has provided handsomely for you. Here we are, citizens-at-large! Oh, when that man takes a fancy to you, he has not his match for good-nature."

"Now, my jewel," said Jacques Collin to his aunt, "you must take la Gonore in hand; she must be humbugged. Five days hence she will be taken into custody, and a hundred and fifty thousand francs will be found in her rooms, the remains of a share from the robbery and murder of the old Crottat couple, the notary's father and mother."

"She will get five years in the Madelonnettes," said Jacqueline.

"That's about it," said the nephew. "This will be a reason for old Nourrisson to get rid of her house; she cannot manage it herself, and a manager to suit is not to be found every day. You can arrange all that. We shall have a sharp eye there. But all these three things are secondary to the business I have undertaken with regard to our letters. So unrip your gown and give me the samples of the goods. Where are the three packets?"

"At la Rousse's, of course."

"Coachman," cried Jacques Collin, "go back to the Palais de Justice, and look sharp——"

"I promised to be quick, and I have been gone half an hour; that is too much. Stay at la Rousse's, and give the sealed parcels to the office clerk, who will come and ask for Madame *de* Saint-Estève; the *de* will be the password. He will say to you: 'Madame, I have come from the public prosecutor for the things you know of.' Stand waiting outside the door, staring about at what is going on in the flower market, so as not to arouse Prêlard's suspicions. As soon

as you have given up the letters, you can start Paccard and Prudence."

"I see what you are at," said Jacqueline; "you mean to step into Bibi-Lupin's shoes. That boy's death has turned your brain."

"And there is Théodore, who was just going to have his hair cropped to be scragged at four this afternoon!" cried Jacques Collin.

"Well, it is a notion! We shall end our days as honest folk in a fine property and a delightful climate—in Touraine."

"What was to become of me? Lucien has taken my soul with him, and all my joy in life. I have thirty years before me to be sick of life in, and I have no heart left. Instead of being the boss of the hulks, I shall be a Figaro of the law, and avenge Lucien. I can never be sure of safely demolishing Corentin except in the skin of a police agent. And so long as I have a man to devour, I shall still feel alive. The profession a man follows in the eyes of the world is a mere sham; the reality is in the idea!" he added striking his forehead. "How much have we left in the cash-box?" he asked.

"Nothing," said his aunt, dismayed by the man's tone and manner. "I gave you all I had for the boy. La Romette has not more than twenty thousand francs left in the business. I took everything from Madame Nourrisson; she had about sixty thousand francs of her own. Oh! we are lying in sheets that have not been washed this twelve months past. That boy had all the pals' blunt, our savings, and all old Nourrisson's."

"Making——?"

"Five hundred and sixty thousand."

"We have a hundred and fifty thousand which Paccard and Prudence will pay us. I will tell you where to find two hundred thousand more. The remainder will come to me

out of Esther's money. We must repay old Nourrisson. With Théodore, Paccard, Prudence, Nourrisson, and you, I shall soon have the holy alliance I require. Listen, now, we are nearly there——"

"Here are the three letters," said Jacqueline, who had finished unsewing the lining of her gown.

"Quite right," said Jacques Collin, taking the three precious documents—autograph letters on vellum-paper, and still strongly scented. "Théodore did the Nanterre job."

"Oh! it was he."

"Don't talk. Time is precious. He wanted to give the proceeds to a little Corsican sparrow named Ginetta. You must set old Nourrisson to find her; I will give you the necessary information in a letter which Gault will give you. Come for it to the gate of the Conciergerie in two hours' time. You must place the girl with a washerwoman, Godet's sister; she must seem at home there. Godet and Ruffard were concerned with la Pouraille in robbing and murdering the Crottats.

"The four hundred and fifty thousand francs are all safe, one-third in la Gonore's cellar—la Pouraille's share; the second third in la Gonore's bedroom, which is Ruffard's; and the rest is hidden in Godet's sister's house. We will begin by taking a hundred and fifty thousand francs out of la Pouraille's whack, a hundred thousand of Godet's, and a hundred thousand of Ruffard's. As soon as Godet and Ruffard are nabbed, they will be supposed to have got rid of what is missing from their shares. And I will make Godet believe that I have saved a hundred thousand francs for him, and that la Gonore has done the same for la Pouraille and Ruffard.

"Prudence and Paccard will do the job at la Gonore's; you and Ginetta—who seems to be a smart hussy—must manage the job at Godet's sister's place.

"And so, as the first act in the farce, I can enable the

public prosecutor to lay his hand on four hundred thousand francs stolen from the Crottats, and on the guilty parties. Then I shall seem to have shown up the Nanterre murderer. We shall get back our shiners, and are behind the scenes with the police. We were the game, now we are the hunters—that is all.

“Give the driver three francs.”

The coach was at the Palais. Jacqueline, speechless with astonishment, paid. Trompe-la-Mort went up the steps to the public prosecutor's room.

A complete change of life is so violent a crisis that Jacques Collin, in spite of his resolution, mounted the steps but slowly, going up from the Rue de la Barillerie to the Galerie Marchande, where, under the gloomy peristyle of the courthouse, is the entrance to the Court itself.

Some civil case was going on which had brought a little crowd together at the foot of the double stairs leading to the Assize Court, so that the convict, lost in thought, stood for some minutes, checked by the throng.

To the left of this double flight is one of the mainstays of the building, like an enormous pillar, and in this tower is a little door. This door opens on a spiral staircase down to the Conciergerie, to which the public prosecutor, the governor of the prison, the presiding judges, King's council, and the chief of the Safety Department have access by this backway.

It was up a side staircase from this, now walled up, that Marie Antoinette, the Queen of France, was led before the Revolutionary tribunal which sat, as we all know, in the great hall where appeals are now heard before the Supreme Court. The heart sinks within us at the sight of these dreadful steps, when we think that Marie Thérèse's daughter, whose suite, and head-dress, and hoops filled the great staircase at Versailles, once passed that way! Perhaps it was in expiation of her mother's crime—the atrocious division of Poland. The

sovereigns who commit such crimes evidently never think of the retribution to be exacted by Providence.

When Jacques Collin went up the vaulted stairs to the public prosecutor's room, Bibi-Lupin was just coming out of the little door in the wall.

The chief of the Safety had come from the Conciergerie, and was also going up to Monsieur de Granville. It is easy to imagine Bibi-Lupin's surprise when he recognized, in front of him, the gown of Carlos Herrera, which he had so thoroughly studied that morning; he ran on to pass him. Jacques Collin turned round, and the enemies were face to face. Each stood still, and the self-same look flashed in both pairs of eyes, so different in themselves, as in a duel two pistols go off at the same instant.

"This time I have got you, rascal!" said the chief of the Safety Department.

"Ah, ha!" replied Jacques Collin ironically.

It flashed through his mind that Monsieur de Granville had sent some one to watch him, and, strange to say, it pained him to think the magistrate less magnanimous than he had supposed.

Bibi-Lupin bravely flew at Jacques Collin's throat; but he, keeping his eye on the foe, gave him a straight blow, and sent him sprawling on his back three yards off; then Trompe-la-Mort went calmly up to Bibi-Lupin, and held out a hand to help him to rise, exactly like an English boxer who, sure of his superiority, is ready for more. Bibi-Lupin knew better than to call out; but he sprang to his feet, ran to the entrance to the passage, and signed to a gendarme to stand on guard. Then, swift as lightning, he came back to the foe, who quietly looked on. Jacques Collin had decided what to do.

"Either the public prosecutor has broken his word or he has not taken Bibi-Lupin into his confidence, and in that case I must get the matter explained," thought he. "Do you mean to arrest me?" he asked his enemy. "Say so without

more ado. Don't I know that in the heart of this place you are stronger than I am? I could kill you with a well-placed kick, but I could not tackle the gendarmes and the soldiers. Now, make no noise. Where do you want to take me?"

"To Monsieur Camusot."

"Come along to Monsieur Camusot," replied Jacques Collin. "Why should we not go to the public prosecutor's court? It is nearer," he added.

Bibi-Lupin, who knew that he was out of favor with the upper ranks of judicial authorities, and suspected of having made a fortune at the expense of criminals and their victims, was not unwilling to show himself in court with so notable a capture.

"All right, we will go there," said he. "But as you surrender, allow me to fit you with bracelets. I am afraid of your claws."

And he took the handcuffs out of his pocket.

Jacques Collin held out his hands, and Bibi-Lupin snapped on the manacles.

"Well, now, since you are feeling so good," said he, "tell me how you got out of the Conciergerie?"

"By the way you came; down the turret stairs."

"Then have you taught the gendarmes some new trick?"

"No, Monsieur de Granville let me out on parole."

"You are gammoning me?"

"You will see. Perhaps it will be your turn to wear the bracelets."

Just then Corentin was saying to Monsieur de Granville—

"Well, monsieur, it is just an hour since our man set out; are you not afraid that he may have fooled you? He is on the road to Spain perhaps by this time, and we shall not find him there, for Spain is a whimsical kind of country."

"Either I know nothing of men or he will come back; he is bound by every interest; he has more to look for at my hands than he has to give."

Bibi-Lupin walked in.

"Monsieur le Comte," said he, "I have good news for you. Jacques Collin, who had escaped, has been recaptured."

"And this," said Jacques Collin, addressing Monsieur de Granville, "is the way you keep your word! Ask your double-faced agent where he took me."

"Where?" said the public prosecutor.

"Close to the Court, in the vaulted passage," said Bibi-Lupin.

"Take your irons off the man," said Monsieur de Granville sternly. "And remember that you are to leave him free till further orders. Go! You have a way of moving and acting as if you alone were law and police in one."

The public prosecutor turned his back on Bibi-Lupin, who became deadly pale, especially at a look from Jacques Collin, in which he read disaster.

"I have not been out of this room. I expected you back, and you cannot doubt that I have kept my word, as you kept yours," said Monsieur de Granville to the convict.

"For a moment I did doubt you, sir, and in my place perhaps you would have thought as I did, but on reflection I saw that I was unjust. I bring you more than you can give me; you had no interest in betraying me."

The magistrate flashed a look at Corentin. This glance, which could not escape Trompe-la-Mort, who was watching Monsieur de Granville, directed his attention to the strange little old man sitting in an armchair in a corner. Warned at once by the swift and anxious instinct that scents the presence of an enemy, Collin examined this figure; he saw at a glance that the eyes were not so old as the costume would suggest, and he detected a disguise. In one second Jacques Collin was revenged on Corentin for the rapid insight with which Corentin had unmasked him at Peyrade's.

"We are not alone!" said Jacques Collin to Monsieur de Granville.

"No," said the magistrate drily.

"And this gentleman is one of my oldest acquaintances, I believe," replied the convict.

He went forward, recognizing Corentin, the real and confessed originator of Lucien's overthrow.

Jacques Collin, whose face was of a brick-red hue, for a scarcely perceptible moment turned white, almost ashy; all his blood rushed to his heart, so furious and maddening was his longing to spring on this dangerous reptile and crush it; but he controlled the brutal impulse, suppressing it with the force that made him so formidable. He put on a polite manner and the tone of obsequious civility which he had practiced since assuming the garb of a priest of a superior order, and he bowed to the little old man.

"Monsieur Corentin," said he, "do I owe the pleasure of this meeting to chance, or am I so happy as to be the cause of your visit here?"

Monsieur de Granville's astonishment was at its height, and he could not help staring at the two men who had thus come face to face. Jacques Collin's behavior and the tone in which he spoke denoted a crisis, and he was curious to know the meaning of it. On being thus suddenly and miraculously recognized, Corentin drew himself up like a snake when you tread on its tail.

"Yes, it is I, my dear Abbé Carlos Herrera."

"And are you here," said Trompe-la-Mort, "to interfere between Monsieur the Public Prosecutor and me? Am I so happy as to be the object of one of those negotiations in which your talents shine so brightly? Here, Monsieur le Comte," the convict went on, "not to waste time so precious as yours is, read these—they are samples of my wares."

And he held out to Monsieur de Granville three letters, which he took out of his breast-pocket.

"And while you are studying them, I will, with your permission, have a little talk with this gentleman."

"You do me great honor," said Corentin, who could not help giving a little shiver.

"You achieved a perfect success in our business," said Jacques Collin. "I was beaten," he added lightly, in the tone of a gambler who has lost his money, "but you left some men on the field—your victory cost you dear."

"Yes," said Corentin, taking up the jest, "you lost your queen, and I lost my two castles."

"Oh! Contenson was a mere pawn," said Jacques Collin scornfully; "you may easily replace him. You really are—allow me to praise you to your face—you are, on my word of honor, a magnificent man."

"No, no, I bow to your superiority," replied Corentin, assuming the air of a professional joker, as if he said: "If you mean humbug, by all means humbug! I have everything at my command, while you are single-handed, so to speak."

"Oh! Oh!" said Jacques Collin.

"And you were very near winning the day!" said Corentin, noticing the exclamation. "You are quite the most extraordinary man I ever met in my life, and I have seen many very extraordinary men, for those I have to work with me are all remarkable for daring and bold scheming.

"I was, for my sins, very intimate with the late Duc d'Otranto; I have worked for Louis XVIII. when he was on the throne; and, when he was exiled, for the Emperor and for the Directory. You have the tenacity of Louvel, the best political instrument I ever met with; but you are as supple as the prince of diplomats. And what auxiliaries you have! I would give many a head to the guillotine if I could have in my service the cook who lived with poor little Esther. And where do you find such beautiful creatures as the woman who took the Jewess' place for Monsieur de Nucingen? I don't know where to get them when I want them."

"Monsieur, monsieur, you overpower me," said Jacques Collin. "Such praise from you will turn my head——"

“It is deserved. Why, you took in Peyrade ; he believed you to be a peace officer—he ! I tell you what, if you had not had that fool of a boy to take care of, you would have thrashed us.”

“Oh ! monsieur, but you are forgetting Contenson disguised as a mulatto and Peyrade as an Englishman. Actors have the stage to help them, but to be so perfect by daylight, and at all hours, no one but you and your men——”

“Come, now,” said Corentin, “we are fully convinced of our worth and merits. And here we stand each of us quite alone. I have lost my old friend, you your young companion. I, for the moment, am in the stronger position, why should we not do like the men in ‘l’Auberge des Adrets ?’ I offer you my hand, and say : ‘Let us embrace, and let bygones be bygones.’ Here, in the presence of Monsieur le Comte, I propose to give you full and plenary absolution, and you shall be one of my men, the chief next to me, and perhaps my successor.”

“You really offer me a situation ?” said Jacques Collin. “A nice situation indeed !—out of the fire into the frying-pan !”

“You will be in a sphere where your talents will be highly appreciated and well paid for, and you will act at your ease. The Government police are not free from perils. I, as you see me, have already been imprisoned twice, but I am none the worse for that. And we travel, we are what we choose to appear. We pull the wires of political dramas, and are treated with politeness by very great people. Come, my dear Jacques Collin, do you say yes ?”

“Have you orders to act in this matter ?” said the convict.

“I have a free hand,” replied Corentin, delighted at his own happy idea.

“You are trifling with me ; you are very shrewd, and you must allow that a man may be suspicious of you. You have sold more than one man by tying him up in a sack after

making him go into it of his own accord. I know all your great victories—the Montauran case, the Simeuse business—the battles of Marengo of espionage.”

“Well,” said Corentin, “you have some esteem for the public prosecutor?”

“Yes,” said Jacques Collin, bowing respectfully, “I admire his noble character, his firmness, his dignity. I would give my life to make him happy. Indeed, to begin with, I will put an end to the dangerous condition in which Madame de Sérizy now is.”

Monsieur de Granville turned to him with a look of satisfaction.

“Then ask him,” Corentin went on, “if I have not full power to snatch you from the degrading position in which you stand, and to attach you to me.”

“It is quite true,” said Monsieur de Granville, watching the convict.

“Really and truly! I may have absolution for the past and a promise of succeeding you if I give sufficient evidence of my intelligence?”

“Between two such men as we are there can be no misunderstanding,” said Corentin, with a lordly air that might have taken anybody in.

“And the price of the bargain is, I suppose, the surrender of those three packets of letters?” said Jacques Collin.

“I did not think it would be necessary to say so to you——”

“My dear Monsieur Corentin,” said Trompe-la-Mort, with irony worthy of that which made the fame of Talma in the part of Nicomède, “I beg to decline. I am indebted to you for the knowledge of what I am worth, and of the importance you attach to seeing me deprived of my weapons—I will never forget it.

“At all times and forever I shall be at your service, but instead of saying with Robert Macaire: ‘Let us embrace!’ I embrace you.”

He seized Corentin round the middle so suddenly that the other could not avoid the hug ; he clutched him to his heart like a doll, kissed him on both cheeks, carried him like a feather with one hand, while with the other he opened the door, and then set him down outside, quite battered by this rough treatment.

"Adieu, my dear fellow," said Jacques Collin in a low voice, and in Corentin's ear, "the length of three corpses parts you from me ; we have measured swords, they are of the same temper and the same length. Let us treat each other with due respect ; but I mean to be your equal, not your subordinate. Armed as you would be, it strikes me you would be too dangerous a general for your lieutenant. We will place a grave between us. Woe to you if you come over on to my territory.

"You call yourself the State, as footmen call themselves by their masters' names. For my part, I will call myself Justice. We shall often meet ; let us treat each other with dignity and propriety, all the more because we shall always remain—atrocious blackguards," he added in a whisper. "I set you the example by embracing you——"

Corentin stood nonplussed for the first time in his life, and allowed his terrible antagonist to wring his hand.

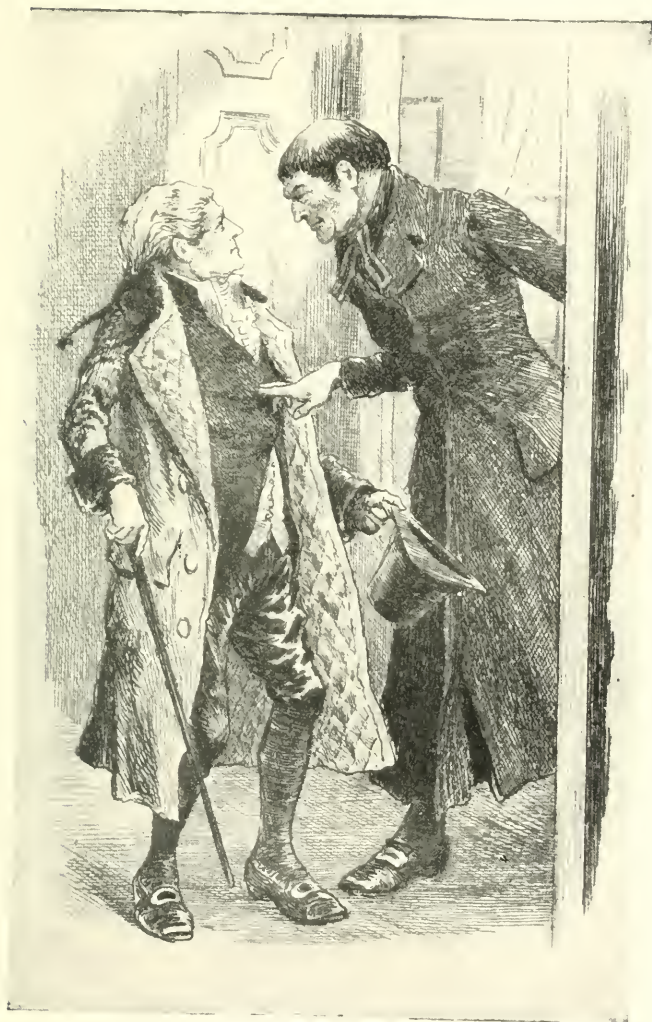
"If so," said he. "I think it will be to our interest on both sides to remain chums."

"We shall be stronger each on our own side, but at the same time more dangerous," added Jacques Collin in an undertone.

"Perhaps you will allow me to call on you to-morrow to ask for some pledge of our agreement."

"Well, well," said Corentin amiably, "you are taking the case out of my hands to place it in those of the public prosecutor. You will help him to promotion ; but I cannot but own to you that you are acting wisely. Bibi-Lupin is too well known ; he has served his turn ; if you get his place, you will

"ADIEU, MY DEAR FELLOW—— THE LENGTH OF THREE
CORPSES PARTS YOU FROM ME."



have the only situation that suits you. I am delighted to see you in it—on my honor——”

“Till our next meeting, very soon,” said Jacques Collin.

On turning round, Trompe-la-Mort saw the public prosecutor sitting at his table, his head resting on his hands.

“Do you mean that you can save the Comtesse de Sérizy from going mad?” asked Monsieur de Granville.

“In five minutes,” said Jacques Collin.

“And you can give me all those ladies’ letters?”

“Have you read the three?”

“Yes,” said the magistrate vehemently, “and I blush for the women who wrote them.”

“Well, we are now alone; admit no one, and let us come to terms,” said Jacques Collin.

“Excuse me, Justice must first take its course. Monsieur Camusot has instructions to seize your aunt.”

“He will never find her,” said Jacques Collin.

“Search is to be made at the Temple, in the house of a demoiselle Paccard, who superintends her store.”

“Nothing will be found there but rags, costumes, diamonds, uniforms—— However, it will be as well to check Monsieur Camusot’s zeal.”

Monsieur de Granville rang and sent an office messenger to desire Monsieur Camusot to come and speak with him.

“Now,” said he to Jacques Collin, “an end to all this! I want to know your recipe for curing the countess.”

“Monsieur le Comte,” said the convict very gravely, “I was, as you know, sentenced to five years’ penal servitude for forgery. But I love my liberty. This passion, like every other, had defeated its own end, for lovers who insist on adoring each other too fondly end by quarreling. By dint of escaping and being recaptured alternately, I have served seven years on the hulks. So you have nothing to remit but the added terms I earned in the jug—I beg pardon, in prison. I have, in fact, served my time, and till some ugly job can be

proved against me—which I defy Justice to do, or even Corentin—I ought to be reinstated in my rights as a French citizen.

“What is life if I am banned from Paris and subject to the eye of the police? Where can I go, what can I do? You know my capabilities. You have seen Corentin, that store-house of treachery and wile, turn ghastly pale before me and doing justice to my powers. That man has bereft me of everything; for it was he, and he alone, who overthrew the edifice of Lucien’s fortunes, by what means and in whose interest I know not. Corentin and Camusot did it all——”

“No recriminations,” said Monsieur de Granville; “give me the facts.”

“Well, then, these are the facts. Last night, as I held in my hand the icy hand of that dead youth, I vowed to myself that I would give up the mad contest I have kept up for twenty years past against society at large.

“You will not believe me capable of religious sentimentality after what I have said of my religious opinions. Still, in these twenty years I have seen a great deal of the seamy side of the world. I have known its back-stairs, and I have discerned, in the march of events, a Power which you call Providence and I call Chance, and which my companions call Luck. Every evil deed, however quickly it may hide its traces, is overtaken by some retribution. In this struggle for existence, when the game is going well—when you have quint and quatorze in your hand and the lead—the candle tumbles over and the cards are burnt, or the player has a fit of apoplexy! That is Lucien’s story. That boy, that angel, had not committed the shadow of a crime; he let himself be led, he let things go! He was to marry Mademoiselle de Grandlieu, to be made marquis; he had a fine fortune; well, a prostitute poisons herself, she hides the price of a certificate of stock, and the whole structure so laboriously built up crumbles in an instant!

“And who is the first man to deal a blow? A man loaded

with secret infamy, a monster who, in the world of finance, has committed such crimes that every coin of his vast fortune has been dipped in the tears of a whole family—by Nucingen, who has been a legalized Jacques Collin in the world of money. However, you know as well as I do all the bankruptcies and tricks for which that man deserves hanging. My fetters will leave a mark on all my actions, however virtuous. To be a shuttlecock between two rackets—one called the hulks and the other the police—is a life in which success means never-ending toil, and peace and quiet seem quite impossible.

“At this moment, Monsieur de Granville, Jacques Collin is buried with Lucien, who is being now sprinkled with holy water and carried away to Père-Lachaise. What I want is a place not to live in, but to die in. As things are, you, representing justice, have never cared to make the released convict's social status a concern of any interest. Though the law may be satisfied, society is not; society is still suspicious, and does all it can to justify its suspicions; it regards a released convict as an impossible creature; it ought to restore him to his full rights, but, in fact, it prohibits his living in certain circles. Society says to the poor wretch: ‘Paris, which is the only place you can be hidden in; Paris and its suburbs for so many miles round is the forbidden land, you shall not live there!’ and it subjects the convict to the watchfulness of the police. Do you think that life is possible under such conditions? To live, the convict must work, for he does not come out of prison with a fortune.

“You arrange matters so that he is plainly ticketed, recognized, hedged round, and then you fancy that his fellow-citizens will trust him, when society and justice and the world around him do not. You condemn him to starvation or crime. He cannot get work, and is inevitably dragged into his old ways, which lead to the scaffold.

“Thus, while earnestly wishing to give up this struggle with the law, I could find no place for myself under the sun.

One course alone is open to me, that is to become the servant of the power which crushes us; and as soon as this idea dawned on me, the Power of which I spoke was shown in the clearest light. Three great families are at my mercy. Do not suppose I am thinking of blackmail—blackmail is the meanest form of murder. In my eyes it is baser villainy than murder. The murderer needs, at any rate, atrocious courage. And I practice what I preach; for the letters which are my safe-conduct, which allow me to address you thus, and for the moment place me on an equality with you—I, Crime, and you, Justice—those letters are in your power. Your messenger may go for them, and they will be given up to him on an order from me.

“I ask no price for them; I do not sell them. Alas! Monsieur le Comte, I was not thinking of myself when I preserved them; I thought that Lucien might some day be in danger! If you cannot agree to my request, my courage is out; I hate life more than enough to make me blow out my own brains and rid you of me! Or, with a passport, I can go to America and live in the wilderness. I have all the characteristics of a savage.

“These are the thoughts that came to me in the night. Your clerk, no doubt, carried you a message I sent by him. When I saw what precautions you took to save Lucien’s memory from any stain, I dedicated my life to you—a poor offering, for I no longer cared for it; it seemed to me impossible without the star that gave it light, the happiness that glorified it, the thought that gave it meaning, the prosperity of the young poet who was its sun—and I determined to give you the three packets of letters——”

Monsieur de Granville bowed his head.

“I went down into the prison yard, and there I found the persons guilty of the Nanterre crime, as well as my little chain-companion within an inch of the chopper as an involuntary accessory after the fact,” Jacques Collin went on. “I dis-

covered that Bibi-Lupin is cheating the authorities, that one of his men murdered the Crottats. Was not this providential, as you say? So I perceived a remote possibility of doing good, of turning my gifts and the dismal experience I have gained to account for the benefit of society, of being useful instead of mischievous, and I ventured to confide in your judgment, your generosity."

The man's air of candor, of artlessness, of childlike simplicity, as he made his confession, without bitterness, or that philosophy of vice which had hitherto made him so terrible to hear, was like an absolute transformation. He was no longer himself.

"I have such implicit trust in you," he went on, with the humility of a penitent, "that I am wholly at your mercy. You see me with three roads open to me—suicide, America, and the Rue de Jérusalem. Bibi-Lupin is rich; he has served his turn; he is a double-faced rascal. And if you set me to work against him, I would catch him red-handed in some trick within a week. If you will put me in that sneak's shoes, you will do society a real service. I will be honest. I have every quality that is needed in the profession. I am better educated than Bibi-Lupin; I went through my schooling up to rhetoric; I shall not blunder as he does; I have very good manners when I choose. My sole ambition is to become an instrument of order and repression instead of being the incarnation of corruption. I will enlist no more recruits to the army of vice.

"In war, monsieur, when a hostile general is captured, he is not shot, you know; his sword is returned to him, and his prison is a large town; well, I am the general of the hulks, and I have surrendered. I am beaten, not by the law, but by death. The sphere in which I crave to live and act is the only one that is suited to me, and there I can develop the powers I feel within me.

"Decide."

And Jacques Collin stood in an attitude of diffident submission.

"You place the letters in my hands, then?" said the public prosecutor.

"You have only to send for them; they will be delivered to your messenger."

"But how?"

Jacques Collin read the magistrate's mind, and kept up the game.

"You promised me to commute the capital sentence on Calvi for twenty years' penal servitude. Oh, I am not reminding you of that to drive a bargain," he added eagerly, seeing Monsieur de Granville's expression; "that life should be safe for other reasons, the lad is innocent——"

"How am I to get the letters?" asked the public prosecutor. "It is my right and my business to convince myself that you are the man you say you are. I must have you without conditions."

"Send a man you can trust to the flower market on the quay. At the door of a tinsmith's store under the sign of Achilles' shield——"

"That house?"

"Yes," said Jacques Collin, smiling bitterly, "my shield is there. Your man will see an old woman dressed, as I told you before, like a fish-woman who has saved money—earrings in her ears, and clothes like a rich market-woman's. He must ask for Madame de Saint-Estève. Do not omit the *de*. And he must say, 'I have come from the public prosecutor for the things you know of.' You will immediately receive three sealed packets."

"All the letters are there?" said Monsieur de Granville inquiringly.

"There is no tricking you; you did not get your place for nothing!" said Jacques Collin, with a smile. "I see you still think me capable of testing you and giving you so much

blank paper. No; you do not know me," said he. "I trust you as a son trusts his father."

"You will be taken back to the Conciergerie," said the magistrate, "and there await a decision as to your fate."

Monsieur de Granville rang, and said to the office-boy who answered—

"Beg Monsieur Garnery to come here, if he is in his room."

Beside the forty-eight police commissioners who watch over Paris like forty-eight petty Providences, to say nothing of the guardians of Public Safety—and who have earned the nickname of *quart d'œil*, in thieves' slang, a quarter of an eye, because there are four of them to each district—beside these, there are two commissioners attached equally to the police and to the legal authorities, whose duty it is to undertake delicate negotiations, and not infrequently to serve as deputies to the examining judges. The office of these two magistrates, for police commissioners are also magistrates, is known as the Delegates' office; for they are, in fact, delegated on each occasion, and formally empowered to carry out inquiries or arrests.

These functions demand men of ripe age, proved intelligence, great rectitude, and perfect discretion; and it is one of the miracles wrought by heaven in favor of Paris that some men of that stamp are always forthcoming. Any description of the Palais de Justice would be incomplete without due mention of these preventive officials, as they may be called, the most powerful adjuncts of the law; for though it must be owned that the force of circumstances has abrogated the ancient pomp and wealth of justice, it has materially gained in many ways. In Paris especially its machinery is admirably perfect.

Monsieur de Granville had sent his secretary, Monsieur de Chargebœuf, to attend Lucien's funeral; he needed a substitute for this business, a man he could trust, and Monsieur

Garnery was one of the commissioners in the Delegates' office.

"Monsieur," said Jacques Collin, "I have already proved to you that I have a sense of honor. You let me go free, and I came back. By this time the funeral mass for Lucien is ended; they will be carrying him to the grave. Instead of remanding me to the Conciergerie, give me leave to follow the boy's body to Père-Lachaise. I will come back and surrender myself prisoner."

"Go," said Monsieur de Granville, in the kindest tone.

"One word more, monsieur. The money belonging to that girl—Lucien's mistress—was not stolen. During the short time of liberty you allowed me, I questioned her servants. I am as sure of them as you are of your two commissioners of the Delegates' office. The money paid for the certificate sold by Mademoiselle Esther Gobseck will certainly be found in her room when the seals are removed. Her maid remarked to me that the deceased was given to mystery-making, and very distrustful; she no doubt hid the bank-notes in her bed. Let the bedstead be carefully examined and taken to pieces, the mattresses unsewn—the money will be found."

"You are sure of that?"

"I am quite sure of the relative honesty of my rascals; they never play any tricks on me. I hold the power of life and death; I try and condemn them and carry out my sentence without all your formalities. You can see for yourself the results of my authority. I will recover the money stolen from Monsieur and Madame Crottat; I will hand you over one of Bibi-Lupin's men, his right hand, caught in the act; and I will tell you the secret of the Nanterre murders. This is not a bad beginning. And if you only employ me in the service of the law and the police, by the end of a year you will be satisfied with all I can tell you. I will be thoroughly all that I ought to be, and shall manage to succeed in all the business that is placed in my hands."

"I can promise you nothing but my good-will. What you ask is not in my power. The privilege of granting pardons is the King's alone, on the recommendation of the keeper of the seals ; and the place you wish to hold is in the gift of the prefect of police."

"Monsieur Garnery," the office-boy announced.

At a nod from Monsieur de Granville the Delegate commissioner came in, glanced at Jacques Collin as one who knows, and gulped down his astonishment on hearing the word "Go!" spoken to Jacques Collin by Monsieur de Granville.

"Allow me," said Jacques Collin, "to remain here till Monsieur Garnery has returned with the documents in which all my strength lies, that I may take away with me some expression of your satisfaction."

This absolute humility touched the public prosecutor.

"Go," said he ; "I can depend on you."

Jacques Collin bowed humbly, with the submissiveness of an inferior to his master. Ten minutes later, Monsieur de Granville was in possession of the letters in three sealed packets that had not been opened ! But the importance of this point, and Jacques Collin's avowal, had made him forget the convict's promise to cure Madame de Sérizy.

When once he was outside, Jacques Collin had an indescribable sense of satisfaction. He felt he was free, and born to a new phase of life. He walked quickly from the Palais to the church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, where mass was over. The coffin was being sprinkled with holy water, and he thus arrived in time to bid farewell, in a Christian fashion, to the mortal remains of the youth he had loved so well. Then he got into a carriage and drove after the body to the cemetery.

In Paris, unless on very exceptional occasions, or when some famous man has died a natural death, the crowd that gathers about a funeral diminishes by degrees as the procession approaches Père-Lachaise. People make time to show them-

selves in church ; but every one has his business to attend to, and returns to it as soon as possible. Thus of ten mourning carriages, only four were occupied. By the time they reached Père-Lachaise there were not more than a dozen followers, among whom was Rastignac.

"That is right ; it is well that you are faithful to him," said Jacques Collin to his old acquaintance.

Rastignac started with surprise at seeing Vautrin.

"Be calm," said his old fellow-boarder at Madame Vauquer's. "I am your slave, if only because I find you here. My help is not to be despised ; I am, or shall be, more powerful than ever. You slipped your cable and you did it very cleverly ; but you may need me yet, and I will always be at your service."

"But what are you going to do ?"

"To supply the hulks with lodgers instead of lodging there," replied Jacques Collin.

Rastignac gave a shrug of disgust.

"But if you were robbed——"

Rastignac hurried on to get away from Jacques Collin.

"You do not know in what circumstances you may find yourself."

They stood by the grave dug by the side of Esther's.

"Two beings who loved each other, and who were happy !" said Jacques Collin. "They are united. It is some comfort to rot together. I shall be buried here."

When Lucien's body was lowered into the grave, Jacques Collin fell in a dead faint. This strong man could not endure the light rattle of the spadefuls of earth thrown by the gravediggers on the coffin as a hint for their payment.

Just then two men of the corps of Public Safety came up ; they recognized Jacques Collin, lifted him up, and carried him to a hackney-coach.

"What is up now ?" asked Jacques Collin when he recovered consciousness and had looked about him.

He saw himself between two gendarmes, one of whom was Ruffard; and he gave him a look which pierced the murderer's soul to the very depths of la Gonore's secret.

"Why, the public prosecutor wants you," replied Ruffard, "and we have been hunting for you everywhere and found you in the cemetery, where you had nearly taken a header into that boy's grave."

Jacques Collin was silent for a moment.

"Is it Bibi-Lupin that is after me?" he asked the other man.

"No. Monsieur Garnery sent us to find you."

"And he told you nothing?"

The two men looked at each other, holding council in expressive pantomime.

"Come, what did he say when he gave you your orders?"

"He bid us fetch you at once," said Ruffard, "and said we should find you at the church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés; or, if the funeral had left the church, at the cemetery."

"The public prosecutor wants me?"

"Perhaps."

"That is it," said Jacques Collin; "he wants my assistance."

And he relapsed into silence, which greatly puzzled the two constables.

At about half-past two Jacques Collin once more went up to Monsieur de Granville's room, and found there a fresh arrival in the person of Monsieur de Granville's predecessor, the Comte Octave de Bauvan, one of the presidents of the Court of Appeals.

"You forgot Madame de Sérizy's dangerous condition, and that you had promised to save her."

"Ask these rascals in what state they found me, monsieur," said Jacques Collin, signing to the two constables to come in.

"Unconscious, monsieur, lying on the edge of the grave of the young man they were burying."

"Save Madame de Sérizy," said the Comte de Bauvan, "and you shall have what you will."

"I ask for nothing," said Jacques Collin. "I surrendered at discretion, and Monsieur de Granville must have received the——"

"All the letters, yes," said the magistrate. "But you promised to save Madame de Sérizy's reason. Can you? Was it not a vain boast?"

"I hope I can," replied Jacques Collin modestly.

"Well, then, come with me," said Comte Octave.

"No, monsieur; I will not be seen in the same carriage by your side—I am still a convict. It is my wish to serve the Law; I will not begin by discrediting it. Go back to the countess; I will be there soon after you. Tell her Lucien's best friend is coming to see her, the Abbé Carlos Herrera; the anticipation of my visit will make an impression on her and favor the cure. You will forgive me for assuming once more the false part of a Spanish priest; it is to do so much good!"

"I shall find you there about four o'clock," said Monsieur de Granville, "for I have to wait on the King with the keeper of the seals."

Jacques Collin went off to find his aunt, who was waiting for him on the Quai aux Fleurs.

"So you have given yourself up to the authorities?" said she.

"Yes."

"It is a risky game."

"No; I owed that poor Théodore his life, and he is reprieved."

"And you?"

"I—I shall be what I ought to be. I shall always make our set shake in their shoes. But we must get to work. Go and tell Paccard to be off as fast as he can go, and see that Europe does as I told her."

"That is a trifle; I know how to deal with la Gonore," said the terrible Jacqueline. "I have not been wasting my time here among the wallflowers."

"Let Ginetta, the Corsican girl, be found by to-morrow," Jacques Collin went on, smiling at his aunt.

"I shall want some clue."

"You can get it through Manon la Blonde," said Jacques.

"Then we meet this evening," replied the aunt; "you are in such a deuce of a hurry. Is there a fat job on?"

"I want to begin with a stroke that will beat everything that Bibi-Lupin has ever done. I have spoken a few words to the brute who killed Lucien, and I live only for revenge! Thanks to our positions, he and I will be equally strong, equally protected. It will take years to strike the blow, but the wretch shall have it straight in the heart."

"He must have vowed a Roland for your Oliver," said the aunt, "for he has taken charge of Peyrade's daughter, the girl who was sold to Madame Nourrisson, you know."

"Our first point must be to find him a servant."

"That will be difficult; he must be tolerably wide awake," observed Jacqueline.

"Well, hatred keeps one alive! We must work hard."

Jacques Collin took a hack and drove at once to the Quai Malaquais, to the little room he lodged in, quite separate from Lucien's apartment. The porter, greatly astonished at seeing him, wanted to tell him all that had happened.

"I know everything," said the abbé. "I have been involved in it, in spite of my saintly reputation; but, thanks to the intervention of the Spanish ambassador, I have been released."

He hurried up to his room, where, from under the cover of a breviary, he took out a letter that Lucien had written to Madame de Sérizy after that lady had discarded him on seeing him at the opera with Esther.

Lucien, in his despair, had decided on not sending this letter, believing himself cast off for ever ; but Jacques Collin had read the little masterpiece ; and as all that Lucien wrote was to him sacred, he had treasured the letter in his prayer-book for its poetical expression of a passion that was chiefly vanity. When Monsieur de Granville told him of Madame de Sérizy's condition, the keen-witted man had very wisely concluded that this fine lady's despair and frenzy must be the result of the quarrel she had allowed to subsist between herself and Lucien. He knew women as magistrates knew criminals ; he guessed the most secret impulses of their hearts ; and he at once understood that the countess probably ascribed Lucien's death partly to her own severity, and reproached herself bitterly. Obviously a man on whom she had shed her love would never have thrown away his life ! To know that he had loved her still, in spite of her cruelty, might restore her reason.

If Jacques Collin was a grand general of convicts, he was, it must be owned, a not less skillful physician of souls.

This man's arrival at the mansion of the Sérizys was at once a disgrace and a promise. Several persons, the count, and the doctors were assembled in the little drawing-room adjoining the countess' bedroom ; but to spare him this stain on his soul's honor, the Comte de Bauvan dismissed everybody, and remained alone with his friend. It was bad enough even then for the vice-president of the Privy Council to see this gloomy and sinister visitor come in.

Jacques Collin had changed his dress. He was in black, with trousers and a plain frock-coat, and his gait, his look, and his manner were all that could be wished. He bowed to the two statesmen, and asked if he might be admitted to see the countess.

"She awaits you with impatience," said Monsieur de Bauvan.

"With impatience ! Then she is saved," said the dreadful magician.

And, in fact, after an interview of half an hour, Jacques Collin opened the door and said :

“Come in, Monsieur le Comte ; there is no more to fear.”

The countess had the letter clasped to her heart ; she was calm, and seemed to have forgiven herself. The count gave expression to his joy at the sight.

“And these are the men who settle our fate and the fate of nations,” thought Jacques Collin, shrugging his shoulders behind the two men. “A female has but to sigh in the wrong way to turn their brain as if it were a glove ! A wink, and they lose their heads ! A petticoat raised a little higher, dropped a little lower, and they rush round Paris in despair ! The whims of a woman react on the whole country. Ah, how much stronger is a man when, like me, he keeps far away from this childish tyranny, from honor ruined by passion, from this frank malignity, and wiles worthy of savages ! Woman, with her genius for ruthlessness, her talent for torture, is, and always will be, the marring of man. The public prosecutor, the minister—here they are, all hoodwinked, all moving the spheres for some letters written by a duchess and a chit, or to save the reason of a woman who is more crazy in her right mind than she was in her delirium.”

And he smiled haughtily.

“Ay,” said he to himself, “and they believe in me ! They act on my information, and leave me in power. I shall still rule the world which has obeyed me five-and-twenty years.”

Jacques Collin had brought into play the overpowering influence he had exerted of yore over poor Esther ; for he had, as has often been shown, the mode of speech, the look, the action which quell madmen, and he had depicted Lucien as having died with the countess' image in his heart.

No woman can resist the idea of having been the one beloved.

“You now have no rival,” had been this bitter jester's last words.

He remained a whole hour alone and forgotten in that little room. Monsieur de Granville arrived and found him gloomy, standing up, and lost in a brown study, as a man may well be who makes an 18th Brumaire in his life.

The public prosecutor went to the door of the countess' room and remained there a few minutes; then he turned to Jacques Collin and said—

“You have not changed your mind?”

“No, monsieur.”

“Well, then, you will take Bibi-Lupin's place, and Calvi's sentence will be commuted.”

“And he is not to be sent to Rochefort?”

“Not even to Toulon; you may employ him in your service. But these reprieves and your appointment depend on your conduct for the next six months as subordinate to Bibi-Lupin.”

Within a week Bibi-Lupin's new deputy had helped the Crottat family to recover four hundred thousand francs and had brought Ruffard and Godet to justice.

The price of the certificates sold by Esther Gobseck was found in the courtesan's mattress, and Monsieur de Sérizy handed over to Jacques Collin the three hundred thousand francs left to him by Lucien de Rubempré.

The monument erected by Lucien's orders for Esther and himself is considered one of the finest in Père-Lachaise, and the earth beneath it belongs to Jacques Collin.

After exercising his functions for about fifteen years, Jacques Collin retired in 1845.

December, 1847.

THE HATED SON

(*L'Enfant Maudit*).

TRANSLATED BY JNO. RUDD, B. A.

I.

HOW THE MOTHER LIVED.

ABOUT two o'clock in the morning, ending a winter's night, the Countess Jeanne d'Hérouville was suffering from such exceeding pains that, although without experience, she well knew them as the pangs of childbirth. The instinct that causes us to expect relief by a constant changing of position made her sit up in the bed; she might the better thus consider a new form of suffering or meditate upon her situation.

She felt a deadly fear, not so much for the risk attending the birth of her first child—a terror to nearly every woman—as for the perils in store for the expected babe. The poor lady, to avoid awaking her husband who lay by her side, took every conceivable precaution, that her great terror of his arousing caused her, as elaborately as an escaping prisoner. She almost ceased to feel the pain, yet it became more intolerable with every moment. She concentrated her whole strength in an attempt to prop herself up, resting her clammy hands upon the pillow, trying thus to ease her tortured body from a position which held her powerless.

On the slightest rustle of the great green coverlet of silk, under which she had known but little sleep since her marriage, she paused as if she had rung a bell. She divided her attention between the rustling folds of the counterpane and a broad, sun-burned, weather-beaten face whose mustache was

close to her shoulder. When a louder breath than usual was emitted by her husband's lips, she was filled with sudden fears that added to the crimson flush of her cheeks caused by this double suffering. A prisoner who, hidden by the night, has at length reached the door of his jail, and then tries to turn the key he finds in an unyielding lock, and trying not to make a sound, was never more daring or more fearful.

When the countess found that she had succeeded in sitting up without disturbing her keeper, she gave a little start of joy which revealed the pathetic sweetness of her nature. The smile, alas, died half-formed upon her lips, the innocent brow was clouded by a sorrowful reflection, and her sad, blue eyes regained their set expression. A deep sigh, and then with the utmost care she replaced her hands upon the nuptial pillow. She seemed as if it might be the first time in her wedded life that she was free to act or think; she looked at everything around her, peeking her neck with hurried, graceful movements, like as a bird in its cage. To see her one might readily discern how full of gayety and joy she had been in the past, but that Fate had cut down all her early anticipations and changed her ingenuous gayety into melancholy forebodings.

The chamber was one of those which, in this day, octogenarian housekeepers make a show of to visitors who may be viewing the mansions of the old nobility, with: "This, monsieur, is the bed-chamber of state in which Louis Treize once slept." Beautiful tapestry of a brown tone was framed in walnut-wood of great depth of border, black with age but of elegant workmanship. The ceiling consisted of the beams ornate with arabesques of the previous century, and showing the speckled grain of chestnut. The gloom of these decorations gave no reflected light, so that it was a work of labor to discern the designs, even when the bright rays of the sun shone directly into the room, which was long, lofty, and wide. A silver lamp standing on the mantel over the cavernous fire-

place gave out so feeble a ray of light that the quivering beams might have been compared to the hazy stars that twinkle anon in the gray twilight of an autumn evening.

The little imps and satyrs hiding in the marble carvings of this fireplace, opposite the bed of the countess, made such horribly grotesque faces that she dreaded to look upon them. She became alarmed lest they might move, or that she might hear a demoniacal laugh from their gaping, distorted mouths. Just now a terrific storm was venting its wrath in the capacious chimney, giving a doleful significance; and the great vent opened so freely to the sky that the firebrands seemed to breathe—glowing, darkening, or sputtering as rose or fell the wind. The family escutcheon of white marble bearing the arms of the Hérouvilles, with all its trappings and figures of the supporters, lent an effect wholly monumental to the erection facing the bed—itself a monument to the honor, glory, and achievements of Hymen.

An enigma it would have been to a modern architect to decide whether the room had been built for the bed or the bed for the room. Two Loves gamboling on the canopy of walnut-wood, garlanded with flowers, might have answered the roster as angels. The walnut pillars which supported this canopy were carved with mythological designs, the interpretation whereof could be found in the Bible or in Ovid's "Metamorphoses of Love." Were the bedstead removed, this baldachin would have served, in its appropriateness, over the pulpit or the church-wardens' seats in a church. The occupants mounted to this throne of love by three steps. A platform ran around it, hung with curtains of watered silk of green; the embroidery was largely conspicuous in a gaudy design of leaves and branches, the pattern known as *ramages*, possibly because the depicted birds were those of the warbling kind. The folds of these curtains were rigid as metal, so heavy was the silken tissue and so ample the quantity. A great crucifix was affixed to the head of this lordly

couch, superstition had there placed it, over this the chaplain of the house of Hérrouville had placed a spray of box, blessed on Palm Sunday, when he renewed the holy water in the font at the foot of the cross.

A wardrobe of precious wood stood on one side of the fireplace; one such as all brides had, at one time, given them on their wedding-day. These ancient pieces of furniture, now so eagerly sought of collectors, were the treasure-chests whence elegant ladies evolved their splendor of dress. Contained in them were: lace, bodices, expensive gowns, high ruffs, satchels, veils, muffs, masks and dominoes, so precious to the coquettes of the XVI. Century. For symmetry another similar piece of furniture stood on the other side; here the comtesse stored her papers, books, and jewels. Antique chairs, upholstered in damask, a large Venetian mirror, with a greenish cast, framed into a toilet table on casters, completed the furnishings of the chamber. A large Persian rug, a tribute of the count's liberality and gallantry, covered the floor. The upper broad step of the bed held a small table-stand on which the countess' maid every evening placed a gold or silver cup containing a spiced draught.

When we have advanced somewhat on life's way we come to understand and realize the effect of surroundings over the moods of our minds. Who but has known sinister apprehensions when the things about him have appeared to give out some secret promise of good. Happy or dejected, man gives ear to the most trivial objects with which he is associated: to them he listens; them, in his superstition, he consults; they become his oracles. Just now the countess was eyeing each article of furniture in her ken, as if each possessed a soul. Was she silently appealing to these inanimate objects for assistance and succor? This gloomy magnificence was ruthless.

With a huge swirl the storm increased its violence. The young wife could hope for no clemency as she heard the thunderings of the heavens; for in those days the credulous

interpreted the changes of the weather in accordance with their moods. She took a hasty glance at the two Gothic windows at the end of the room, but their diamond panes, and the close network of lead in which they were inserted, prevented her seeing the sky and thus assuring herself whether—as certain monks, greedy of pelf, had declared—the end of the world was at hand. She might well believe in their prognostications, indeed, for the sound of the raging sea, whose angry waves beat threateningly on the walls of the château, made common cause of the war of the tempest, and the very rocks seemed to quake.

The darts of pain were now become more frequent and more severe; still the countess dared not arouse her husband. She studied his features as though Despair had advised her to hunt there for some comfort against so numerous evil predictions. Ominous as all about the young wife seemed to be and in spite of the tranquil sleep of the husband, that face looked yet more ominous. The rays of the lamp, flickering in the wind, died away at the foot of the bed, only occasionally lighting up the features of the count; thus the dancing glimmer gave the face of the sleeper the agitation of angry thoughts. Even when she had discovered the cause of this, the countess was scarcely reassured. Every time a gust from the gale flung the light upon the great face, accentuating the lights and magnifying the shadows of the wrinkles that marked it, she could fancy that her husband stared up at her with malignant eyes—stern, unendurable. The count's brow, like the war then going on between the Catholics and Calvinists, was implacable; it was evil even in repose. The wrinkles graven there by the tribulations of a soldier-life had given it somewhat of a resemblance to the gargoyles seen on monuments of that date; with hair like the white mossy beards on old oaks, prematurely gray, framing an ungracious, evil face, stamped with the brutal passion of religious intolerance. The aquiline nose, like the beak of a bird of

prey, the dark puckered ring around a tawny eye, the prominent cheek-bones, with hollow cheeks, the deep, austere lines of the face, the contemptuous pout of the nether lip—each spoke plainly of ambition, despotism, brute force; the more to be feared as a narrow skull betrayed an utter lack of wit and a courage void of generosity. Beside, this face was terribly disfigured by a long, deep scar, extending across the right cheek and resembling a second mouth. At the age of twenty-two the count, eager to distinguish himself in that miserable religious struggle for which the massacre of St. Bartholomew gave the signal, had been severely wounded at the siege of la Rochelle. The disfigurement this wound had made had caused a still deeper enmity against the heretical party, and, by a not unnatural instinct, he had a positive hatred for every man with a handsome face. Even before this so great disaster he was so ill-favored that no demoiselle would accept his suit. The one passion of his youth had been for a famous beauty yclept the Fair Roman. This new disfigurement had made him more susceptible and diffident, to the extent, in fact, of deeming it impossible that he could ever inspire a genuine passion in one of the other sex, and his temper became so savage that, if he had ever been successful in a love adventure, it would only have been to the terror he inspired by his cruelty.

The terrible Catholic's left hand, which lay outside the bed so as to effectually guard the countess as does a miser his treasure, finishes the portrait of the man; that enormous hand, covered with hair so long, showing such a network of veins and strongly marked muscles, that it looked like a branch of beech in the grasp of clinging, yellow ivy tendrils. Had a child seen the count's face he would at once have known it for one of the ogres of which such dreadful tales are told by old nurses. To see how huge a man he was, it was only necessary to note the length and breadth of the place filled by the count. His eyelids were shaded by his bushy, grizzled eye-

brows in such a way as to add to the intensity of the light in his eyes, which sparkled with the ferocious glare of a wolf at bay in a thicket. Under his lion-like nose was a large unkempt mustache—the cares of the toilet were not for him—which hid his upper lip. For the countess' comfort the count's mouth was just now happily silent; for the softest accents of that hoarse voice caused her an inward tremor. He was but fifty years old, yet might he well pass for sixty, so malign had the fatigues of war marred his features; but his strong constitution yet retained its robustness; but little cared he to be taken for a coxcomb.

The countess was not quite eighteen and formed a striking contrast to his huge figure, pitiable to contemplate. Fair and slender; with chestnut hair showing gleams of gold, falling adown her neck in a halo of russet loveliness, forming a setting for the delicate face, such a one as Carlo Dolce loved for his ivory-pale Madonnas, who seem as if they were sinking under the burden of physical suffering. She might have been deemed an angel sent by heaven to minimize the violent will of the Comte d'Hérrouville. "No, he will not kill us," said she to herself, after looking for some time narrowly at her husband. "Is he not frank, noble, courageous, true to his word? Ah! True to his word!" As she thought over this a second time, she shuddered and was violently agitated.

It is necessary, in order to understand the horror of the countess' present position, to explain that this nocturnal scene occurred in 1591; at this period civil war was raging in France and the laws were in abeyance. The excesses of the League, averse to Henry IV.'s* accession of the throne, surpassed all the calamities of the religious wars. License had at length gone so far that no surprise was occasioned to see a powerful lord effecting the murder of his enemy, even in the open day. When a military strategical movement, undertaken though it might be for private ends, was done in the name of the King

* The first Bourbon monarch of France.

or the League, it was always applauded by the one or other side. Balagny, a common soldier, was thus within a toss-up of becoming a sovereign prince at the very gates of France. As for murders committed in the family circle, "they were no more heeded, if I may use such a phrase" (says a contemporary writer), "than the reaping of a sheaf of wheat;" that is, unless they were attended with aggravated cruelty. Some time before the King's death, a lady of the Court assassinated a gentleman who had spoken ill of her. One of Henry III.'s favorites said to him:

"And, Sire, by the Lord she did it handsomely!"

The Count d'Hérouville, one of the most rabid royalists in Normandy, caused compliance to the rule of Henry IV. by the number of his executions in all parts of that province adjacent to Brittany. Head of one of the wealthiest houses in France, he had added to his riches enormously by marrying, seven months before the night on which this story opens, Jeanne de Saint-Savin, a young demoiselle who had, by a luck common enough in those days, when men died off like flies, most unexpectedly united in her own person the wealth of both branches of the Saint-Savin family; thus her broad lands added to the income of the count. Necessity and terror were the only witnesses to this uncongenial union.

At a banquet given about two months afterward, by the town of Bayeux to the count and countess in honor of their marriage, a discussion arose, which even in those ignorant times was thought absurd; it related to the legitimacy of children born ten months after a woman's widowhood or seven months after the wedding.

"Madame," said the count, brutally to his wife, "I cannot help myself as to your giving me a child ten months after my death. But if you are wise, you won't commence on a seven-months babe!"

"Why, old bear, what would you do?" asked the young Marquis de Verneuil, thinking the count was joking.

“I would wring two necks at once, both mother’s and child’s.”

Such an absolute reply effectually closed the discussion so imprudently started by a gentleman from Lower Normandy. The guests gazed silently at the charming young countess, in a daze of horror. Each was fully convinced that should such an event occur the ferocious count would carry out his threat to the letter.

His speech sank deep into the heart of the unhappy young wife, and but now she recalled the searing words as a flash of foresight had then foretold her that her infant would be born at seven-months’ end. She flamed inwardly, the whole of her vitality seeming to concentrate in her heart, so intensely as to cause her to feel as though her body was in a bath of ice. Not a day from that time to the present but that this cold, chilling of unconfessed terror had checked the most innocent thoughts of her mind. The recollection of the count’s look and voice, as he gave utterance to the dread sentence of death, still froze the blood in the countess’ veins; it stifled her pains as she leaned over that slumbering face; vainly she tried to trace out upon it some signs of the pity she sought for when it was awake.

This child, doomed to death before its birth, was now making frantic struggles and urgent efforts to break its prison and to come to the light of day. With a deep sigh, she moaned :

“Poor little one——”

She said no more; there are thoughts that no mother can endure. Bereft of reason, at this moment she felt as if about to be suffocated by an unknown anguish. The tears overflowed and slowly trickled down her cheeks, leaving two glistening streaks, and hung from her chin like dewdrops on a lily. Who shall dare assert that an infant lives in a neutral place which the mother cannot attain, during such time as the soul enfolds the body, communicating its impressions?

the thoughts stir the blood and inject healing balms or corroding poisons. Did not the horror that rocked the tree injure the fruit? Were the words, "Poor little one!" a prophecy inspired by a vision of the future. The mother shuddered with a horrid dread, her clairvoyance was piercing.

The sting of the count's retort was a mysterious link binding his wife's past to this premature childbirth. The odious suspicions proclaimed so publicly had thrown a shadow of terror upon the future. Ever since that ill-fated banquet she had, then, been striving to drive away a thousand scattered images which, unlike other women who cultivate them, she feared and which haunted her in despite of her wishes. She dared not allow her mind to revert to that halcyon time when her heart had been free to love. Like some simple melody associated with one's native place, which will bring tears to the eyes of the exile, these reminiscences gave her such happiness that her youthful conscience told her they were so many crimes, using them to make the count's threat seem the more horrible—here was the secret terror that caused the countess torture.

Most faces in sleep have an aspect of blandness, due to the perfect repose of both mind and body; this made but little change in the aspect of the count's naturally harsh features, but the illusion displays such an attractive mirage that the girl-wife took some hope from this seeming peacefulness. Torrents of rain were pouring down and formed the only audible sound, for the storm had spent its fury and was only heard as a feeble moan; fear and pain for a moment ceased their torture. She gazed upon the man to whom Fate had bound her with inexorable bands, and as she gazed she let in upon her soul a day-dream, as it were, of such potent efficacy, of such undilute sweetness, that she hesitated to dispel it. In it she saw the gleam of her former happiness, a happiness lost beyond recall.

In her waking vision Jeanne saw the unpretentious château

where her careless childhood had been passed ; there were the green lawns, the gurgling creek, the small chamber—scene of her childish sports. She saw herself plucking the flowers and re-planting them to grow again, wondering the while why they should wilt however much she might water them ; and why they would not grow as of yore. Again she saw confusedly the great town ; the large house blackened by age whither she was taken by her mother, herself then being seven. Her memory depicted the hoary heads of the masters who had taught and tormented her. Amid a flood of Italian and Spanish jargon singing in her brain she saw the person of her father. She saw him alighting from his mule on his return from the court of justice ; she took his hand to mount the steps up to the old manor-house, the while her chatter charmed away the cobwebs of anxiety, which not always were removed when he disrobed his black or red gown, the ermine fur of which had one day fallen under the mischievous clipping of her scissors. She gave but one look at her aunt's confessor, a stern, rigid, and fanatical old priest, the prior of the convent of Poor Clares, and whose duty it was to instill in her the mysteries of religion. Hardened by the intolerant severity assumed against heresy, he talked of naught but hell, the chains of which he was ever rattling ; the vengeance of heaven was portrayed and she was made to tremble by the assurance that God's eye was ever upon her. She was thus rendered so timid that she dared not to lift her eyes in the presence of the old priest, all feeling died in her ; her respect was killed saving only for her mother, who up to now had been the partner in her frolics.

Suddenly she was in the second age of her childhood, though as yet she understood nothing of life. She half laughed as she remembered the time when her whole pleasure was to sit at work beside her mother in the salon hung with tapestry, to pray in the church, to sing a ballad, accompanying herself upon the lute, to read a romance of the days of

chivalry, to pick a flower in pieces in a vein of curiosity, to try and discover what manner of gift her father had obtained for her on the feast of the Blessed Saint-John—her patron saint—and to guess at the conclusion of speeches left unfinished in her presence. Passing from this stage through the sixteen years of her youth, she beguiled a moment from her pain; then she eclipsed them, erasing them as a pencil-mark is rubbed out on a page.

But now the vision brought her promptly to that glorious morning, that ravishing day, when at the extreme end of the oak-paneled parlor she first beheld her handsome cousin. Alarmed by the riots in Paris her mother's family had sent the young courtier to Rouen, hoping that there his uncle might train him in the duties of the magistracy, whose post he expected at some time to fill. The countess smiled involuntarily as she remembered the tremulous haste with which she retired on catching sight of this unknown relation. Despite her promptitude in opening and closing the door, one glance had left upon her soul so strong an impression that even at this moment she seemed to see it yet occurring. Her eye had merely stolen an admiring peep at his magnificent adornment in his Paris dress; but now, bolder in reminiscence, her eye wandered from the violet velvet mantle embroidered with gold and lined with satin to the spurs of his boots, the pretty lozenge-shaped slashings of his hose and doublet, the rich collaret showing a neck as white as itself. Again she stroked with her hand the handsome face with its tiny pointed mustache, parted and curled at either end, and a "royale" of beard as small as one of the ermine tails on her father's robe.

In the silence of the night, her eyes fixed upon the silk curtains which she no longer saw, forgetting both the storm and her husband, the countess recalled the days which seemed as years (so full were they); the old garden shut in by dark walls and the gloomy house seemed to become golden and bright. She loved and was beloved. She feared her mother's stern-

ness, and one morning she slipped into her father's study, climbed upon his knee, and awaited his smile and caresses before giving him her maiden confidences. Seeing that smile she said: "And shall you scold me if I tell you something?" Again she heard the numerous questions he asked her, as she for the first time whispered of her love; she could now hear him saying: "Well, well, my child, we shall see! If he studies closely, if he fits himself as my successor, if you still care for him, I will assist you in the plot."

She listened no longer; hastily kissing her father, she hurried from the chamber, knocking down and overturning everything in her haste as she flew to the great linden-tree where every morning, ere her mother rose, she had a tryst with her charming cousin, Georges de Chaverny. Faithfully the young courtier promised to study Law and Custom. He laid aside the splendid habiliments of the nobility of the sword to don the austere costume of the law.

"I like you much better in black," she said.

It was an untruth, but the fib had given comfort to her lover and eased his chagrin at having thrown away his weapons. The remembrance of the numerous little artifices to deceive her mother, whose severity was great, brought back to her the soulful joys of that so innocent love, authorized and mutual: sometimes a rendezvous under the limes, where they could move, act, and speak freely and alone; anon a furtive embrace, a stolen kiss—all the artless first-fruits of a passion confined in the strict bounds of modesty. Once more living through those ravishing days, as in a dream, she dared to kiss, in the void, that fair young face with glowing eyes, the rosy mouth that spoke so fervently of love. She had loved Chaverny, poor in appearance; but had she not there discovered treasures of gentleness and love in that soul, meek in its strength?

Her father died suddenly. Chaverny was not appointed his successor. The flames of civil war burst forth. By

Chaverny's care she and her mother found a secret refuge in a small town of Lower Normandy. Soon the deaths of other relatives made her one of the richest heiresses in France. But happiness was not attendant upon wealth. The savage and terrible face of the Comte d'Hérouville, a suitor for her hand, arose before her eyes like a sombre thundercloud, spreading a pall-like gloom over the gilded meadows so lately smiling in the sun. The distraught countess tried to cast off her memories the scenes of weeping and despair, brought upon her by her long resistance.

Dimly she watched the burning of the small town, Chaverny cast into prison as a Huguenot, threatened with death, awaiting a hideous martyrdom. At last came an awful night when her mother, pale and dying, threw herself at her daughter's feet. Jeanne could save her cousin's life by yielding—she yielded. It was night. The count came, all bloody as he was, from the battlefield; all was ready, the priest, the altar, the torches! Jeanne was henceforward doomed to misery. Hardly had she time to say to her young cousin, now at liberty: "Georges, if you love me, never see me more!"

She heard the departing steps of her lover whom she never saw again, but in the depths of her heart she cherished his last look, which so often illumined her dreams. Like a living cat shut up in a lion's cage, the young wife was always in dread of her master's claws which ever threatened her. If she intended being happy, it could only be by her forgetting the past and giving thought only to the future.

"I am not guilty," she said; "but if I am guilty in the eyes of the count, it is as though I were really so. Perhaps it is that I am. But the Holy Virgin conceived without——"

She paused.

At this moment when her thoughts were so misty, her spirit away in the realms of phantazy, her innocence made her ascribe to that last burning look of her lover the occult power exercised over the mother of our Lord by the visitation of the

angel. This supposition, worthy of the days of her innocence to which her thoughts had reverted, vanished before the memory of a conjugal scene more odious than death. The poor countess had not a doubt as to the legitimacy of the child then moving in her womb. The first night of her marriage came before her in all the horror of its agony, bringing in its train many more such (but worse); and sorrowful days.

"Ah! poor Chaverny!" she cried, with tears, "you so gentle, so gracious—you were ever kind to me!"

Turning her eyes upon her husband, as if to persuade herself that that harsh face might contain a promise of the mercy she had so dearly purchased, she saw that the count was awake. His yellow eyes, bright as a tiger's, glittered beneath his bushy eyebrows, and never had his eyes been so piercing as at this moment. The countess, terrified at having encountered them, shrunk beneath the great counterpane and remained perfectly motionless.

"Why do you cry?" asked the count sharply, pulling aside the cover which concealed her. That voice, which always terrified her, hid a specious attempt at softness which seemed a good augury to her.

"I am in much pain," she said.

"Well, my pretty one, suffering is not a crime; why tremble when I look at you? Alas! what must I do to be loved?"

The wrinkles upon his forehead were visibly deepening.

"I plainly perceive," he said, with a sigh, "that I am always a terror to you."

Prompted by the instinct of feeble natures, the countess, interrupted by feeble moans, exclaimed: "I fear a miscarriage. Yesterday I was clambering over the rocks, I think I must have strained myself."

Hearing these words, the *Sieur d'Hérouville* turned upon his wife such a flash of suspicion that she reddened and shuddered. He mistook the artless fear of him for the torture of remorse.

"It may perhaps be the beginning of a regular labor," he said.

"Should it be, what then?" she asked.

"If so, and in any case, I must at once get a leech here. I will fetch one."

The gloomy look which accompanied these words quite overcame the countess, who fell back upon the bed with a groan, caused more by the sense of warning of her fate than by the agony of the coming crisis. The moan only further convinced the count of the justness of his suspicions. He affected a calmness, which the tones of his voice, his gestures, his looks belied; he hastily arose, wrapped himself about in a dressing-gown which lay on a chair, and began by locking a door near the chimney, which led to the state-rooms and the great stairway.

Seeing her husband pocket that key, the countess had a presentiment of imminent danger. Next she heard him open a door opposite to the one he had just locked, the chamber in which the lords of Hérouville slept, who did not honor their wives with their noble company. The only knowledge the countess had of this room was that of hearsay. Jealousy had ever kept her husband by her side. When military service required his absence from the castle, more than one Argus was left by the count to spy upon her every move, proving his shameful doubts.

Despite the most careful attention the countess heard no more. The count had, in fact, made his way to a long gallery, adjoining his room, and which ran down the western wing of the castle. His great-uncle, Cardinal d'Hérouville, a confirmed bibliomaniac, had there collected a library interesting as much for the beauty as the number of the volumes it contained; prudence had caused him to adopt a curious contrivance due to timidity or monastic fear. A silver bell, set in motion by concealed wires, hung at the head of the bed of a stalwart retainer. The count now pulled this chain

and the spurred boots of his henchman were soon heard approaching, clanging on the stone steps as he neared the door. As he noted this, the count drew the rusty bolts of the secret door protecting the entrance from the gallery to the tower, and admitted into the sanctuary of learning a man-at-arms, the stalwart appearance of whom was at one with his master. This man, but half awake, seemed to have made his way thither by instinct; the horn lantern he grasped in his hand gave so dim a light down the long library that his master and he appeared in the gloom as two phantoms.

"Saddle my war-horse at once, and come with me yourself."

This order was given in such an emphatic manner that it fully aroused the man's latent intelligence. Raising his eyes to those of his master he received so piercing a glance that he started as though he had had an electric shock.

"Bertrand," added the count, laying his right hand on the servant's arm, "take off your cuirass and put on the uniform of a captain of guerillas."

"My God! monseigneur! What? to disguise myself as belonging to the League! Excuse me, I will obey, but I would as readily be hanged."

The flattered count smiled; but to efface this expression which so forcibly contrasted with that of his face, he said roughly:

"Choose the strongest horse in the stable, so you may keep up with me. We will ride like balls fired from an arquebuse. Be you ready when I am. I will ring to apprise you."

Bertrand bowed in silence and withdrew; but when a few steps away he muttered to himself, as he heard the howling of the gale:

"All the devils are loose, *jarnidieu!* I should have been surprised if this one had stayed quietly in his bed. It was such a night as this that we took Saint-Lô."

Returning to his room the count looked out and put on the disguise which had many times served his purpose in his campaign stratagems. The shabby buff doublet that he now wore looked as if it might have belonged to one of the poor, so seldom paid troopers of Henry IV.; in this he returned to the room in which his wife lay moaning.

"Try to bear your sufferings in patience," he said. "I will founder my horse, if necessary, to bring you speedy relief of your pain."

This was not an alarming speech, and the countess, emboldened by these words, was on the point of questioning him, when the count suddenly asked her :

"Where do you keep your masks? tell me."

"My masks?" she replied. "Good God! what want you with them?"

"Where are they?" he repeated, with his usual impetuous violence.

"In the press," she said.

She could not repress a shudder when she saw her husband select from amongst her things a half-mask (*touret de nez*), as common in use by ladies of that age as is the wearing of gloves by those of our day. When the count had added an old, gray felt hat, ornamented with a broken cock's-feather, he was quite unrecognizable. He girded a broad leather belt around his middle, and stuck therein a dagger which was not often worn by him. These squalid clothes gave him so terrible an aspect, and he neared the bed with such a strange motion, that the countess believed her last hour had come.

"Oh, don't kill us!" she cried. "Leave me my child and I will love you well."

"You must indeed feel guilty to offer me as the ransom of your sins the love that is lawfully mine."

The count's voice was lugubrious, and the bitter words were emphasized by a look which fell heavy as lead, crushing the countess.

"My God!" she sorrowfully cried, "then innocence is fatal."

"Your death is not in question," said her lord, arousing out of a lethargy into which he had fallen. "But you are to do exactly as you are commanded, and, for love of me, what I require."

He flung one of the masks upon the bed, and smiled in derision as he noted the start of involuntary fear which the light touch of the velvet mask had caused her.

"You will give me but a puny child," he said; "on my return you will wear the mask upon your face. No barber-surgeon shall boast that he has seen the Countess d'Hérouville."

"A man!—why, fetch a man for this purpose?" she feebly asked.

"Eh, my lady, am not I the master here?" replied the count.

"What matters one horror the more!" murmured the countess in despair; but her liege lord had disappeared, so the exclamation was not a further danger, though the measures of the oppressor are as far-reaching as the terrors of the victim.

Presently, in a brief lull of the storm, the countess heard the galloping of two horses that seemed to fly across the sandy dunes and rocks by which the castle was surrounded. This sound was soon lost in the roar of the waves. Soon she found herself a prisoner in this vast chamber, alone in the dead of a night both awful and threatening, without any succor against an evil she felt approaching with rapid strides. She tried in vain to think of some stratagem for saving this child conceived in tears, already become her only comfort, the spring of all her thoughts, the future of her affections, her sole frail hope.

Made bold by maternal courage, she took the horn used by her husband to summon his retainers, opened a window, and made the brass utter a few feeble notes that were lost upon the vast expanse of waves, like a bubble floated in the air by a

child. She felt the uselessness of that moan unheard of men, and turned to hasten through the apartments, hoping to find at least one way of escape. She reached the library, and there sought in vain for the secret passage; she felt along the wall of books and opened the window looking out upon the courtyard; here she again aroused the echoes with the horn, but found it vain to struggle against the blast of the hurricane. Her helplessness caused her to attempt to obtain the help of one of the women, though each and all were creatures of her husband. But passing into the oratory, she discovered that the only door leading to her suite of apartments had been locked by the count. This was a horrible discovery. Such precautions taken to isolate her gave presupposition to her thoughts of a purpose of implied murder without witnesses. As the moments passed the pains of her labor became more agonizing, more severe, more racking. The hideous thought of a possible murder, together with the exhaustion of her travail, stole from her the little strength remaining. She was like a shipwrecked mariner who, after battling against mighty waves, is at last submerged by one less violent than others he has successfully encountered. The terrible bewilderment of pain prevented her tracing the flight of time. At the moment that she felt, all alone and without help, that the child would be born, then to her terror was added that of such disaster as her ignorance exposed her, the count reappeared without a sound to betray his arrival. He appeared like a demon at the close of a compact for the soul, come to claim that for which he had bargained. He muttered fiercely at finding his wife's face uncovered, but, after carefully masking her, he raised her in his arms and laid her on the bed in her chamber.

The fear of this apparition and hurried removal for a short time eased her pain; she gave a furtive glance at the actors in this mysterious scene, but not recognizing Bertrand, who was masked like his master. After hurriedly lighting some candles, the rays from which mingled with those of the newly

risen sun, which bathed the window-panes in crimson, the serving-man went to stand in the embrasure of a window, his face to the wall, and seemingly he was studying its thickness ; he maintained such rigidity of position that he might have been mistaken for a statue. In the centre of the room the countess saw a short, fat man, out of breath, with his eyes bandaged and his features so distorted with terror that the natural expression was unguessable.

“By the holy cross ! you rascal,” said the count, restoring his eyesight by the simple method of roughly snatching the bandage which then hung upon his neck, “I warn you against looking at anything but the miserable creature on whom you are now to exercise your skill ; for if you do I’ll pitch you into the river that flows under this window, your neck ornamented with a diamond circlet that shall weigh a hundred pounds or more.” Saying this he gave a twitch to the handkerchief that had bound the stupefied fellow’s eyes.

“Examine, first, if this is a miscarriage ; if it is, you answer for her life with your own. But should the child be born alive, then bring it to me.”

Saying this the count seized the unhappy leech by the middle, hoisted him easily as a feather, and placed him down by the side of the countess ; then he went to the window and began drumming on the panes, anon casting glances at his serving-man, the bed, the sea, as if pledging to give the latter the expected infant to cradle forever.

The man whom the count and Bertrand had with brutal violence torn from his bed and fastened to the crupper of the latter’s horse, which, so he thought, might have had every hound of hell at its heels, was a personage whose individuality was characteristic of the period ; and whose influence was destined to make itself felt in the house of Hérerville.

At no epoch were the nobility so little informed in natural science, and never was astrology held in such honor as at this time ; at no period was there such desire to know the future.

This universal ignorance and curiosity have caused the utmost confusion in human knowledge ; all things were mere personal experience ; theory had as yet no nomenclature ; printing was enormously expensive ; scientific intercommunication had no facilities. The church persecuted the science of search based on the analysis of natural phenomena. And persecution begat mystery. Thus to the people as well as the nobles, physicist, alchemist, astrologer and necromancer, mathematician and astronomer were six attributes forming one whole in the person of the leech, or physician. At that time a clever medical man was suspected of magic ; and while curing the sick he was expected to draw their horoscopes.

Princes protected the men of genius who would reveal the future ; they gave them lodging in their palaces and awarded them pensions. The famous Cornelius Agrippa, who came to France to become the physician of Henry II., declined to predict the future, which Nostradamus had done, and for this reason he was dismissed by Catherine de' Medici in favor of Cosmo Ruggiero. Thus the men of science who were superior to their age were seldom appreciated ; they only inspired an ignorant fear of the occult studies and their results.

Without quite being one of the famous mathematicians, the man abducted by the count enjoyed in Normandy the equivocal reputation of a leech known to perform mysterious works. He belonged to the class of sorcerers who to this day, in some parts of France, are known as "bonesetters," *rebouteurs*. This name was given to certain untaught geniuses who, without apparent study, but by hereditary knowledge, and often by long practice, the observation of which accumulates in a family, can replace broken bones ; that is, they mended broken limbs and cured man and beast of various maladies, and possessed secrets reputed to be magical for the treatment of more serious cases.

Maître Antoine Beauvoulair, the name of our present bone-setter, had not only inherited important traditions from his

father and grandfather, both famous practitioners, but he was also learned in medicine and was given to the study of natural science. The country people saw his room full of books and other strange things which gave to his successes a tinge of magic. Without altogether regarding him as a sorcerer, the people for a hundred miles around treated Antoine Beauvouloir with a respect akin to terror; and, what was a cause of far more real danger for himself, he was in possession of secrets of life and death concerning the families of the nobles in that region. Like his father and grandfather before him, he was celebrated for his skill in confinements, abortions, and miscarriages.

Now in those days of unbridled disorder, crimes were so frequent and passions ran so violent that it was often necessary that the nobility should let Maître Beauvouloir into secrets both shameful and terrible. His discretion, so essential to his safety, was above suspicion; so his patients paid him handsomely, and his inherited fortune was thus much augmented. Always on the go, sometimes—as we have just seen—aroused in the dead of night; sometimes compelled to spend several days beside some great lady, he was still unmarried; in fact, his reputation had barred some damsels from accepting him. He was incapable of finding consolation in the chances his profession afforded him, which gave him such power over female weaknesses; the poor bonesetter felt himself fitted for every family joy to which he was unable to attain. The good man had an excellent heart concealed under the deceptive guise of a cheerful disposition, further attested by his puffy cheeks and rotund figure, the vivacity of his fat, little body, and the candor of his speech. He was anxious to marry that he should have a daughter who might transfer his property to some poor noble; he disliked his calling as a bonesetter, and longed to raise his family from the position in which the prejudice of the times had placed it.

He had no objections to attending the feasts and jollifica-

tions which usually followed his principal achievements; in fact, he the rather enjoyed them. The habit of finding himself on such occasions the most important personage of the company had invested him with a coat of dignity disguising his natural liveliness. Even his impertinences were usually well taken in crucial moments when it often pleased him to affect a masterly deliberateness. In other respects he was as inquisitive as a magpie, as greedy as a greyhound, and as garrulous as a diplomatist who can talk forever without saying anything. Despite these faults, which were developed in him by the numerous adventures into which his profession led him, Antoine Beauvouloir passed as the least bad man in Normandy. Though he was one of the few men who are superior to their age, the strong commonsense of a Norman countryman had taught him to effectually keep his ideas and discoveries to himself.

Finding himself by the bedside of a woman in labor, the worthy bonesetter soon recovered his presence of mind. He felt the pulse of the masked lady, without, however, noting its beat, but so as to reflect on the situation in which he found himself. In none of the shameful, and often criminal, cases in which he had been called upon by force to serve had so much precaution been taken to shroud the mystery as in this instance. Many times had his death been threatened as the surest means of insuring his secrecy in cases which he had been engaged in, spite of his own will, but never had he felt himself in such jeopardy as now. Before all else he was determined to find out whom it was that now employed him; thus he could discover the actual extent of his danger, that he might, if possible, save his so precious hide.

"What is the trouble?" he asked the countess in a low voice, as he placed her in a suitable position to receive his help.

"Do not allow him to have the child——"

"Speak up!" thundered the count, hindering the leech

from hearing the last words of his patient. "Otherwise," added the husband, carefully disguising his voice, "say your *In manus.*"

"Complain aloud," said Beauvouloir to the lady; "cry! scream! By the mass! that man has a necklace as little suited to your neck as my own. Courage, my little lady!"

"Treat her lightly," cried the count.

"Monsieur is jealous," said the operator in a shrill tone, fortunately drowned by the countess' cries.

Luckily for Maître Beauvouloir, Nature was merciful. It was more of an abortion than a birth, and so puny was the child that the mother's sufferings were not very severe.

"Holy Virgin," exclaimed the bonesetter, "it is not a miscarriage after all!"

The count stamped with such furious rage as to shake the floor. The countess pinched the leech.

"Ah! I see," he said to himself. To the countess he whispered: "It ought to have been a premature birth, eh?" The countess nodded an affirmative reply, as if incapable of otherwise expressing herself.

"This is not at all clear to me," muttered the bonesetter.

Like all men in constant practice in this branch of the science, he recognized a woman in her "first trouble," as he was wont to call it. Though the modest inexperience of the countess was plainly to be seen in her movements, and distinctly proved her virgin ignorance, the leech, to show his smartness, exclaimed:

"The lady is as adept at it as if she had never done anything else."

The count then said, with a calmness more terrifying than his rage:

"Give me the child."

"Do not give it him. for God's sake," cried the mother, whose almost savage cry awoke in the breast of the little man a kind of courageous pity, which attached him, more than he

would have acknowledged to himself, to this child of noble birth who was despised of his father.

"The child is not yet born; don't count your chickens before they are hatched," he said, coldly, hiding the infant.

Surprised at hearing no cries, the leech proceeded to examine it, thinking that it must be dead; the count seeing the deception sprang upon him at a bound.

"By God and all His saints! will you give it to me!" the count yelled, snatching up the hapless victim which uttered feeble cries.

"Take care! It is deformed and nearly lifeless; it is doubtless a seven-months' child," said Beauvouloir, clutching the count's arm. Then, with a strength given him by pity, he hung on to the count's fingers, gasping into his ear:

"Spare yourself a crime, the child cannot live."

"Wretch!" said the count in a fury, as the leech wrenched the child from his hands, "who told you I wished to slay the child? Cannot I caress it?"

"You had better wait until he is eighteen years old, if you wish to embrace him in that manner," replied Beauvouloir, reassuming his importance. "But," he added, thinking of his own safety, for he now recognized the Comte d'Hérouville, who, in his rage, had forgotten to disguise his voice, "have him baptized at once, but do not speak of his danger to his mother or it will be her death."

The shrug of satisfaction which escaped the count when the child's death was foretold had suggested this speech to the bonesetter as the only means of saving the child for the time being. Beauvouloir now hastened to restore the child to its mother, who had fainted, and he pointed reprovingly to her as who should say: "See to what a condition our discussion has reduced her." The countess had, indeed, heard all; for in many of the great crises of life it is not at all uncommon for the senses to develop a hitherto unknown sensitiveness. But the cries of the infant, now laying beside her

on the bed, had brought her back to consciousness as if by magic ; she fancied she heard the voice of angels when, under cover of the whimperings of the babe, the leech whispered in her ear :

“ Take care of him and he will live to be a hundred. Beauvoulour knows what he is talking about.”

A celestial sigh, a covert pressure of the hand, rewarded the leech, and, before yielding the infant to the impatient mother's arms, he carefully examined whether the father had injured the frail creature, the marks of whose “ caress ” were still visible. The nearly crazed manner in which the mother hid her son, and the threatening look she cast upon the count through the eyeholes of her mask, caused Beauvoulour to shudder.

“ She will die if she loses her child too suddenly,” said he to the count.

During the latter part of this scene the Comte d'Hérrouville seemed not to see or hear anything. Rigid, and, as it might seem, absorbed in deep meditation, he stood by the window, idly drumming on the panes. But he turned at the last words of the leech, with an impulse of frenzy, and came nearer him with uplifted dagger.

“ Miserable clown ! ” he cried, giving him the opprobrious name (*manant*) applied as an insult to the Leaguers by the Royalists. “ Impudent rascal ! your science which makes you the accomplice of gentlemen who steal inheritances, by prolonging or cutting short a hereditary race, scarce prevents my ridding Normandy of her noted sorcerer.”

Saying which, and much to the trembling Beauvoulour's gratification, the count violently replaced the dagger in its sheath.

“ Could you not,” continued the count, “ for once in your life, find yourself in the honorable company of a noble and his wife without suspecting them of the base calculations and trickery of your own kind, the common herd, forgetting that

they, unlike the gentle-born, have no motive for them? Kill my son? Take him from his mother? Whence have you such crazy notions? Am I a madman? Why do you attempt to alarm me about the life of so vigorous an infant? Fool! I despise your silly talk. I want you to know that I had no faith in your bragging virtue. Could you but have known the name of the lady you have brought to bed, you would have boasted of having seen her. Great God! You might have by excess of caution killed both the mother and the babe, or at least one of them. But as you are here, Master Leech, your miserable life shall answer for theirs—just remember that.”

The bonesetter was mystified by this sudden change in the count's intentions. This show of affection for the deformed infant alarmed him much more than the impatient rages of fury and the brutal impatience hitherto manifested by the count, whose tone in saying the last words seemed to Beauvouloir to reveal a scheme to arrange a better plot to achieve his infernal ends. The shrewd fellow turned the matter over in his mind and finally a flash revealed it:

“I have it,” he thought. “This great noble does not wish to make his wife hate him; he means to trust to Providence in the person of an apothecary. I must warn the lady to carefully watch the food and medicine of her babe.”

He turned to approach the bed, when the count, who had opened a closet, stopped him by an imperious gesture and held out a purse. Beauvouloir saw through the red meshes that it was well lined with gold. It was thrown to him contemptuously, and Beauvouloir greedily, but with a qualm of dissatisfaction, picked it up.

“Though you ascribe to me the attributes of a villain I am not released from the obligations of paying you like a lord. I shall not ask you to be discreet. This man here,” and he indicated Bertrand, “will make it quite clear to you that wherever trees and rivers are to be found, there I have my

diamond-necklaces all ready for such wretches who would dare chatter of me."

Speaking thus the count slowly neared the leech, pushed a chair noisily to him, as if inviting him to be seated, as he himself now was, by the bedside; then to his wife, in a mock-tender voice, he said:

"Well, my pretty, so we have a son; this is a most joyful thing for us. Do you still suffer?"

"No," murmured the countess.

The unconcealed surprise of the mother, her timidity, and the tardy expression of pleasure on the father's part, convinced Beauvouloir that there was some incident behind all this which even his acumen could not decipher. He was still suspicious and he laid his hand on the countess' pulse, less to note its action than to convey a warning.

"The skin is moist; I fear nothing for madame. She will, of course, have a little milk-fever, but you need not take alarm; it won't amount to anything."

At this point the wily bonesetter paused, then pressed the lady's hand to beg her attention.

"If you wish to avoid all anxiety about your son, madame," said he, "never leave him. Suckle him yourself, and beware the drugs of apothecaries. The mother's breast is the remedy for all infantile complaints. Many a birth have I seen at seven months, but never before one so little painful as this. It is scarcely surprising though, as the child is so small. I could put it in a wooden shoe! I am certain he cannot weigh more than sixteen ounces. Milk, milk, milk! Keep him ever at your breast, and you will save him."

These last words were accompanied by a further significant pressure of the fingers. Despite two flashes of yellow flame through the eye-holes of the count's mask, Beauvouloir spoke these words with the imperturbability of the conscientious man who intends to earn his fee.

"Halloo! bonesetter, you are leaving your old felt hat be-

hind you," said Bertrand, as he accompanied him out of the bedroom.

The cause of the count's sudden mercy toward his son was founded on a legal point. At the moment when Beauvouloir had stayed his murderous hand, avarice and the Norman usage rose before him. Each of these mighty powers numbed his fingers and drowned his hatred. One cried: "The property of your wife cannot come to the family of Hérouville save through a male heir." The other pointed to the picture of the dying countess, and her estates being claimed by the collateral heirs of the Saint-Savins. Both said leave to nature the extinction of the hated son, to await the birth of a second-born, who might be strong and vigorous, before he rid himself of his wife and his first-born. He saw neither wife nor child; he saw the estates only; his hatred was softened by ambition. He was anxious to comply with the country usage, and therefore only wished that the half-dead infant should become strong, at least in appearance. The mother, knowing the count's nature, was still more astonished than the leech; she still retained her instinctive fears, at times openly showing them, for the courage of a mother had suddenly been acquired.

For several days the count was most assiduous in his attendance on his wife, he showed her such attentions as were prompted by interest, and imparted thereto a semblance of tenderness. The countess was quick to see that it was to her alone that these were paid. The hatred of the father for the son was plainly to be noted in the most trivial of things; he abstained from looking at or touching him; if the child cried, he abruptly got up and left the chamber: in short, he seemed to endure its living only in the hope of its dying. But even this self-restraint was galling to the count. The day that he noticed his wife's perception of this, although not fully understanding the danger that threatened the child, he

announced that on the morning of the day appointed for his wife's churching he was about to take his departure, the pretext being that of rallying his men-at-arms to the support of the King.

Such were the circumstances which preceded and accompanied the birth of Étienne d'Hérouville. If the count had no other reason for desiring the death of this disowned son, he would still have been the object of his hatred—this poor Étienne. For he firmly believed that this child was the son of Chaverny. But apart from this, the misfortune of a rickety, sickly constitution was a flagrant offense to his pride as a father. If he execrated handsome men, he no less contemned weakly ones, in whom mental intelligence took the place of bodily strength. To please him a man must be tall, ugly of feature, robust, ignorant. Étienne, whose weakness would compel him, as it were, to sedentary occupations and study, was sure to find in his father a relentless enemy. His struggle with that colossus had begun in the cradle, and his only support against that cruel antagonist was the mother's heart; the love of which had augmented as the perils increased around him.

Buried in seclusion by the abrupt departure of her husband, Jeanne de Saint-Savin found her only consolation and happiness in her child. She loved him as women do love the offspring of illicit passion; she was obliged to suckle him, but the duty never caused her weariness. She would not allow her women to care for the babe. She dressed and undressed him, ever finding fresh pleasure in each care he required. Her face beamed with happiness as she attended the needs of the little creature.

As Étienne's birth had been premature, no baby clothes were ready for him—those that were needed she now made herself; she did this with such skill and perfection as only you mothers—ye who have worked in silence for a treasured child—can know. Every needleful of thread gave birth to a memory, a

hope, a wish, and a thousand thoughts were sewn into the stuff with the pretty patterns she embroidered. The days were too short in hours for these manifold occupations and the careful watchings of the devoted mother; they flew by, filled with hidden pleasures.

The bonesetter's advice was ever present in the countess' mind. She feared for her child; gladly would she have abstained from sleep to assure herself that none, even her most trusted servants, should approach him while she slept; his cradle was near her bed; suspicion keeping watch over it.

While the count was absent she ventured to send for the bonesetter, whose name she had caught and remembered. To her, Beauvouloir was a man to whom she owed an untold debt of gratitude; and she desired to question him on many points regarding her son. Should an attempt be made to poison—how should she foil it? In what way could she build up his frail constitution? Should she presently wean him? If she should die, would Beauvouloir take upon himself to undertake the care of the little one's health?

To the questions of the countess, Beauvouloir, deeply moved, replied that his fears were lively as the countess'; that he mistrusted as much as herself that an attempt would be made to poison Étienne; but of this there need be no fear so long as she nursed the child; afterward, when obliged to feed him, always to taste the food first.

"If Madame la Comtesse," said he, "feels anything strange upon her tongue, a prickly, pungent, bitter, strong briny taste—anything startling to the palate—reject the food. Let the child's clothes be washed under your own eyes, and do you yourself keep the key of the closet in which they are contained. If anything should happen the child, send for me instantly, I will come."

These instructions of the leech sank deep into Jeanne's heart. She begged Beauvouloir to ever regard her as willing at all times to do him any service in her power to render.

Upon this the bonesetter then confided to her that his happiness lay in her hands.

He briefly related how the Count d'Hérouville had, for lack of the favor of the fair ladies of the Court, in his youth loved a courtesan, known by the name of La Belle Romaine, who had formerly been mistress to the Cardinal de Lorraine. This woman, before long abandoned by the count, had died miserably at Rouen, whither she had followed the count, leaving a child named Gertrude. The poor woman had beseeched his favor on behalf of this daughter, but he made the excuse of her beauty for refusing to acknowledge her. The girl, who was even handsomer than her mother, had been succored by the sisters of Poor Clares, the mother superior of whom was Mlle. de Saint-Savin, an aunt of the countess'. Beauvouloir, having been called upon to treat her for an illness, had fallen madly in love with her; and if Madame la Comtesse, he said, would arrange the affair, she would not only repay him for what he had done, but make him grateful to her for life. Beside the count might, sooner or later, evince an interest in so beautiful a daughter and, perhaps, further promote her interests indirectly by making him, Beauvouloir, his physician.

The countess, compassionate to all true lovers, promised her help to the leech, and so warmly did she pursue the cause that at the birth of her second child she obtained from her husband a favor she was by the custom at that time authorized to beg, a *dôt* for the fair Gertrude, who was shortly afterward married to Beauvouloir. Thus the fair bastard instead of taking the veil took a husband. This little fortune and the savings of the leech enabled him to buy a charming estate, called Forcalier, adjoining the Château d'Hérouville; and giving his life the dignity of a scholar.

Comforted by the kind leech the countess felt her life filled with joys not given other mothers. Every woman is lovely when she presses her child to her breast to still its cries and

soothe its pain, but an Italian painting could hardly be found depicting a more touching sight than that of the countess as she saw Étienne thriving on her milk; her own blood, as it were, adding life to the little thing whose existence was tethered by a hair.

Mother and child, two feeble creatures, seemed united in one thought; they understood each other long before language could assist them in interpretation. From the moment when Étienne first turned his eyes upon the things about him, with the wondering gaze of infancy, his glance had fallen on the gloomy arras of the chamber walls. When his baby ears first noted sound and strove to listen, he heard the monotonous wash of the sea as the tide ebbed and flowed, breaking against the rocks with a rhythm like the pendulum of a clock. Thus place, sound, things, all that strikes the senses and moulds the character, gave him a predisposition to melancholy.

His mother, was she not also doomed to live and die amid the clouds of sadness? While to him, from his birth up, she was the only being that existed on earth for him; she filled for him the desert. Was not the countess condemned to pass her life alone and to find her all in her boy, who, like her lover, Chaverny, was the victim of persecution? Like all feeble children, Étienne's was a passive, gentle temperament, and in this he resembled his mother. His nerves were of such delicacy that a sudden noise or a boisterous person's presence gave him a kind of fever. He was like one of those frail insects for whom God seems to temper the wind and the heat of the sun; quite incapable of fighting against the least obstacle, he, like them, yielded without resistance or complaint to everything that seemed aggressive. This angelic patience inspired a sentiment in the mother which removed all fatigue from the incessant care his frail health required.

She was able to thank God for placing Étienne in such an atmosphere of peace and silence, in which surroundings only could he be happy. His mother's hands—to him so strong, so

gentle—would often lift him up to look out the diamond-shaped windows. From them his eyes, with the celestial blue of his mother's, seemed to take in all the grandeur of the ocean. For hours the two would sit and contemplate the infinite vastness of the waters; by turns dull or radiant, silent or filled with sound.

These prolonged meditations were an apprenticeship of Étienne to grief. Nearly always at these times his mother's eyes would fill with tears, and during these sad day-dreams the poor babe's face would look like a lace net puckered with a too heavy load.

Soon his precocious knowledge of suffering revealed to him the power that his little plays had in diverting his mother; he would then try to divert her with caresses such as she affected in her attempts at soothing him. His little elfin hands, his stammered words, his intelligent laugh seldom failed to rouse her from her reverie. When he was tired, his love for her kept him from complaining.

“Poor, dear, little sensitive!” cried the countess, as he fell asleep, tired with the game he had been playing and which had driven the sad memories from her mind, “how can you live here? who will understand you—you whose tender heart is seared by a stern look: you who, like your unhappy mother, values a pleasant smile as something more precious than the world can offer? My angel, mother loves you! But who will love you in the world? Who will detect the treasures hidden in that frail casket? No one. Like me, you are alone on earth. May the good God ever preserve you from experiencing, as I have, a love approved by God but thwarted by man.”

She sighed and wept. The graceful pose of the child as he lay across her knees brought a pathetic smile to her lips. She looked long at him, tasting of those raptures known only of God and mothers.

She found how great an effect her voice, when accompanied

by the guitar, had in charming her boy ; she sang the sweet ballads of the day, the meanwhile fancying she could trace upon his lips, all smeared with milk, the smile with which Chaverny had often expressed his thanks when she had laid down her mandolin. Often was it that she censured herself for thus recalling the past, but again and again would it revisit her. The child, unconscious accomplice, as he was, smiled at the merry melodies that Georges loved.

Until he was eighteen months old the child's delicate health had forbade her taking him out of the house, but now the faint color that tinged his pale cheek with pink, like the petals of a wild rose, promised life and health. She was beginning to rejoice in the prognostications of the worthy leech, and glad in being able, owing to the count's absence, to so carefully guard her boy against all dangers, when letters from her husband's secretary gave notice to the household of the count's early return.

One morning the countess, given up to the glad joy of all mothers when their child takes its first steps alone, was playing with Étienne on the floor, when she suddenly heard the heavy footfall of a man upon the boards. She had hardly risen with a start of involuntary surprise, when she found herself confronted with the count. She gave a cry ; but tried to instantly undo that rash mistake by going to meet him and offering her forehead for a kiss.

"Why did you not apprise me of your intended return?" said she.

"My reception would have been more cordial, but less frank," he bitterly replied.

Then his eyes beheld the child. Its evident health in which he found it provoked him to a gesture less of astonishment than rage. But he repressed his fury and forced a smile.

"I bring good news," said he ; "I am made governor of Champagne and have the King's promise to be made a duke and a peer of France. Moreover, we have inherited a princely

fortune; that damned Huguenot, Georges de Chaverny, is dead."

The countess turned pale and sank into a chair. She guessed the secret of the devilish glee on her husband's face, and which the sight of Étienne seemed to aggravate.

"Monsieur," said she, her voice broken, "you well know that I have long been attached to my Cousin de Chaverny. You will have to answer to God for the anguish you have caused me."

At these words the count's eyes flashed fire; his lips trembled, but so enraged was he that speech was impossible; he flung his dagger on the table with such violence that the metal resounded like a thunderclap.

"Listen to me," said he, in his sternest voice, "and mark well my words: I will never see or hear the little monster you have in your arms. He is your child, but none of mine. In nothing does he resemble me. By God and His holy saints! hide him, I say, from my sight, or——"

"Great God!" cried the now thoroughly alarmed countess, "protect us!"

"Silence!" said her husband. "If you do not want me to throttle him, let him be kept out of my way."

"So, then," said the countess, as she gathered strength to withstand the tyrant, "swear to me that if you do not meet him you will not try to kill him. May I trust your word as a nobleman to that extent?"

"What means all this?" exclaimed the count.

"If you will not swear, why slay us both now, together!" cried she, falling upon her knees, the child clasped in her arms.

"Rise, madame. I pledge you my word as a man of honor to do nothing against the life of that misshapen abortion, provided he lives among the rocks lining the sea beneath the castle, and that he never crosses my path. I will give him that fisherman's hut down there for his dwelling, and the

beach for a domain. But woe betide him if ever I find him outside those limits."

The countess began to weep bitterly. "Look at him!" said she. "He is your son."

"Madame!"

At this word the frightened mother carried away the child, whose heart was beating like that of a young bird, taken from its nest by a peasant boy. Whether innocence has a charm which even the most implacable man cannot resist, or whether the count regretted his violence and feared to plunge into despair a creature so necessary to his pleasure and his plans, it is certain that by the time his wife returned he had made his voice as gentle as was possible to him.

"Jeanne, my sweet," said he, "do not bear me ill-will; give me your hand. It is never possible to know how one should take you women. I return bringing you honors and wealth, and yet, *tête-Dieu!* you receive me like an enemy. My new government will compel long absences until I can exchange it for that of Lower Normandy; and I beg, my dear, that you will at least look pleasantly upon me while I remain here."

The countess well knew the real purport of these words, the feigned softness of which did not blind her.

"I know my duty," said she, in a melancholy tone, mistaken by her husband for tenderness.

The timid creature was too pure in mind, had too much dignity to try, as some clever woman might have done, to govern the count by adding calculation to her conduct—a kind of prostitution which seems degradation to a noble soul. She turned silently away to comfort her despair by walking with Étienne.

"By God! shall I never be loved?" cried the count, seeing a tear in his wife's eye as she left the room.

Incessantly threatened as she thus was, her motherhood became to the poor lady a passion, such a one as women throw

into an illicit affection. By a species of occult power, which in secret every mother possesses, and which was especially strong between Jeanne and her boy, she was able to make him understand the peril that encompassed him, and he dreaded his father's approach. The terrible scene of which he had been witness was impressed upon his memory, producing a kind of sickness. The sound of the count's footstep contracted his features, and the ears of the mother became less quick than the instinct of the boy, as a warning of the impending danger of his father's presence. As he grew older, this faculty created by terror so constantly increased, that, like the red savages of America, Étienne could distinguish his father's step and hear his voice at immense distances. This sympathetic terror, which she shared with Étienne, inspired a fuller love between them and they became more closely united ; this union was so strengthened that, like two flowers growing upon one stem, they bent to the same breeze and revived with the same hope. They were one life, in short.

When the count again left the castle Jeanne was pregnant. This time the birth came in its proper course of time, and she was delivered, with much suffering, of a heavy boy at the time which prejudice adjudges right. It became in a few short months the living image of his father, but this further increased the hatred of the count for his first-born. To save her cherished one the countess readily consented to every plan formed by her husband to promote the happiness and fortunes of the second son, whom he named Maximilien. Étienne, being promised a cardinal's hat, was given over to the priesthood, in order that Maximilien might inherit the estates and titles of the house of Hérrouville. At this cost the poor distraught mother thought she might insure the safety of the hated son.

No two brothers were ever more unlike than Étienne and Maximilien. The youngest from his birth was fond of noise, violent exercise, and war ; his father had the same passionate

affection for him that his mother felt for Étienne. By a tacit understanding each took charge of the child of their heart.

The duke, for about this time Henry IV. rewarded the services of my lord of Hérouville with a dukedom, not wishing to overtax his wife, as he claimed, gave the nursing of Maximilien to a wet-nurse, a stout peasant-woman of Beauvais, found for him by Beauvoulair. To Jeanne's great joy he announced to her that he intended bringing up this son in his own way. He was taught a holy horror of books and study; he was given by his father full instructions in the mechanical arts necessary to a military career; he made a good horseman of him; he became an excellent shot with the arquebuse; and could use his dagger with great skill. When the boy was old enough he took him on the hunt, and let him acquire the savage speech, the brutal manner, physical energy, and the manly tone and appearance which in his opinion constituted the accomplished gentleman-of-arms. By the time he was twelve years old the young nobleman was a well-licked lion's cub, ill-trained and as formidable as his father himself, he being allowed every freedom of tyranny and oppression to all who came near him.

Étienne lived in the little house or lodge near the sea given him by his father, and fitted up by the duchess in such manner as afforded him some of the comforts and pleasures of life which were his due. She there spent the greater part of her time. The mother and child together roamed over the rocks and beach, keeping ever strictly within the limits of the shore laid out as his domain of shells, moss, pebbles, and seaweed. She plainly pointed out to him the extent of his demesne and did not fail to caution him of the sudden death that awaited him, should he ever so little cross that border. Étienne felt the fear for his mother, long before he could realize it for himself; while still young the mere mention of the name of Hérouville filled him with a panic which crushed all his energy and filled him with the helpless terror of a girl who

falls upon her knees to ask a token of protection. The boy's terror of his father was so great that, like the Eskimo, who lives and dies in his snow, he made a native land of his rocks and cottage and was fearful and uneasy did he but pass his frontier.

The duchess, well aware that her child could find no happiness save in solitude and a restricted sphere, could not regret the fate that was thus imposed upon him; she used this enforced vocation to prepare him for a noble life, by occupying him in study and science; to this end she brought to the castle Pierre de Sebonde as the preceptor of the future Cardinal d'Hérouville. Nevertheless, in spite of the tonsure imposed upon him by his sire, she was determined that his education should not be wholly ecclesiastic, and she took means to secularize it. She had Beauvoulair teach him the mysteries of natural science, and gave liveliness to him by teaching him Italian and gradually inducting him into the poetic loveliness of that language. While the duke was leading Maximilien off to attack, at the risk of his life, the wild boar in his lair, Jeanne wandered with her boy along the milky-way of Petrarch's sonnets or the mighty labyrinth of the "*Divina Commedia*."

The youth had been endowed by nature, as compensation for his infirmities, with so lovely a voice that to hear him sing was a standing delight; music was taught him by his mother, and their tender, pathetic songs, sung to the accompaniment of the mandolin, were held out as the guerdon promised for some more than usual arduous study required by the Abbé de Sebonde. Étienne would listen to his mother with such intensity of expression in his eyes, such passionate admiration, that she had never seen save in those of Georges de Chaverny.

The first time the poor lady had thus revived her girlhood memories, in the long, slow look of her child, she covered his face with frenzied kisses, and she blushed when Étienne asked

why she seemed to love him more than ever before. She made reply that she loved him more and more with every hour. She found in the training of his mind and in the disciplining of his soul pleasures akin to those she had experienced in nourishing his body with her milk. All her pride and self-love she concentrated in the attempt to make him superior to herself, not in ruling him. Only hearts without tenderness love to dominate, true affection craves abnegation—the virtue of strength.

When Étienne could not at first comprehend some demonstration, some abstruse text, a theme, a theorem, the poor mother, who was ever present at the lessons, seemed to long to infuse knowledge, as she had formerly, at his least cry, fed him at the breast. But what a pure and perfect joy suffused her being when Étienne saw and took in the true sense and meaning of the teachings. She proved, as Sebonde said, that a mother lives a dual life whose feelings cover two existences.

“Ah, if some woman as loving as myself would hereafter infuse into him the light of love, how happy he might yet become,” was often her thought.

The duchess thus added to the natural feelings binding a son to his mother by the enhancing tenderness of a resuscitated love. The frail health of Étienne caused her for some time to continue the same care she had devoted to his nonage. She herself would undress and put him to bed; none but herself ever combed and smoothed, perfumed and curled his locks; his toilet was a long caress. She kissed the beloved head each time she so lightly pressed it with the comb. Just as a woman takes delight in being almost a mother to her lover, by giving some trifling service, so did this mother treat her boy as her gallant; she traced a likeness, faint enough perhaps, in his features to the cousin still beloved beyond the grave. Étienne seemed almost the ghost of Chaverny detected in the far-off heart of a magic-mirror, and she would whisper

to herself that there was less of the priest and more of the cavalier in the boy.

But the powerful interests which condemned Étienne to the priesthood came to her mind, and she kissed the hair that the scissors of the church should presently shear, leaving her tears there. But, in spite of the unjust compact she had made with the duke, she could never perceive in the dim perspective future that Étienne was either priest or cardinal. His father's utter neglect of him enabled her to postpone the time when her boy should take holy orders.

"There is always time enough," she would say.

Without acknowledging the thought that lay deeply buried in her heart, she trained Étienne in the manners of the Court ; she would have him as gentle and tender as Georges de Chaverny. Her allowance had been much reduced, for the duke's ambitions demanded this, and he himself managed the family estates, spending the rental in ostentatious splendor or upon his retainers ; she had adopted the plainest of attire for her own wear, spending nothing upon herself, that she might have the more to give her son velvet cloaks, high-boots trimmed with braids, doublets of rich brocades, gallantly slashed. This self-denial gave all the delight of those hidden sacrifices that are made for those whom we love. As she embroidered a ruff, it became a joy to think of the time when it would adorn her boy's neck. Alone she took charge of Étienne's clothes, linen, scents, and dress ; herself she only dressed for his eyes, for she loved to be thought charming by him.

The day came when all her cares, prompted by a sentiment which seemed to enter the flesh of her son and give it vitality, had their reward. Beauvoulair, the blessed man who had made himself dear to this outcast heir, and whose teachings had made him so precious to the child, whose anxious eye had often caused the duchess to quake as she saw it intently regarding her son, declared that Étienne might now enjoy a long

life, provided no violent emotion should convulse that frail body. Étienne was now sixteen.

At that age he was just five feet, a height he never exceeded ; but Georges de Chaverny had been of middle height. His skin, transparent and rosy as a little girl's, showed the delicate network of blue veins beneath. It was white as porcelain. His eyes, light blue and ineffably gentle, seemed to implore the protection of man and woman both ; his beseeching glance fascinated before the melody of his lips could charm. Genuine modesty was on every feature. Long chestnut hair, very fine and glossy, was parted on his brow and fell in two bandeaux which curled at the ends.

But his cheeks were pale and worn, and his ingenuous brow, furrowed with the lines of congenital suffering, were painful to see. His mouth (always gracious), though adorned with very fine teeth, wore the fixed smile which we associate with the lips of the dying. His hands, white as a woman's, were remarkably well shaped.

A habit of meditation had caused him to droop his head like a blanched plant, but this stoop was in keeping with his person ; it was the last grace imparted by a great artist to bring out and emphasize its latent thought. Étienne's head was that of a delicate girl placed upon the shoulders of a weakly, deformed man.

Poesy, in whose delightful meditative moods we roam like botanists scouring the vast fields of thought, the fruitful comparison of human ideals, the great thoughts that are conceived of the works of genius, came to be the inexhaustible and tranquil joys of the young man's solitary and dreamy existence. Flowers, those ravishing creatures whose fate seemed to resemble his own, were the objects of his love. Happy to see in her son these innocent pastimes taking the place of the rough contact with social life, which he could never have endured, than some pretty fish of the ocean could have survived

the rays of the sun upon the sand, the duchess encouraged Étienne's taste by bringing him Spanish *romanceros*, Italian *motets*, books, sonnets, and poetry. The library of the Cardinal d'Hérouville was put in his possession; reading filled his life.

These readings, which his fragile health forbade his continuing for any long stretch of time, were interspersed with rambles among the rocks of his domain; he found his wilderness bright with smiling flowers of lovely hues and sweet perfume; these were in turn relieved by naïve meditations which kept him for hours sitting motionless before his darling flowers—those so sweet companions—or, crouching in the niche of some great rock, he studied a pretty seaweed, a moss, or lichen; maybe he sought a poem in the fragrant flower as the bee might seek its nectar.

He often admired, without set purpose, unable to explain his pleasure to himself, the delicate tracery of the petals of some rich-colored flower; the fine texture of those rich tunics of gold or azure, green or purple; the fringes so exquisitely beautiful, the varied loveliness of calyx and leaf, their smooth, velvety surfaces, often rent—as his would be—by a slightest touch. Later, a thinker as well as poet, he would detect the reason of these innumerable manifestations of nature by discovering the indication of unknown faculties; for from day to day he made progress in the interpretation of the Divine Word which is written upon all things here below. These persistent and secret researches in the occult world gave to his life the appearance of the somnolence of genius.

For many hours would Étienne bask upon the sands, happy, a poet, all unconscious of his being. The sudden coming of a gilded insect, the tremulous motion of the sunbeams in the ripple of the sea, that vast sheening mirror of waters, a shell, a crab, each was an event, a delight to this ingenuous young soul. And then to see his mother coming, to hear from afar the rustle of her dress, to await her, kiss her, talk to her, to

listen to her voice, caused him such keen emotion that often a slight delay would throw him into a violent fever.

He was naught but soul, and, to save that still weak and debilitated body from the strong emotions of the soul, he needed silence, caresses, peace in all the world about him, and a woman's love. For the time being his mother gave him the love and the caresses; the rocks gave silence; flowers and books beguiled his solitude; his little kingdom of sand and shells, of grass and seaweed, was to him a universe ever bright and new.

Étienne imbibed all the benefits of this innocuous physical and absolutely innocent life; this mental and moral life so poetically noble. Only a child in development, in mind a man, he was equally angelic from either standpoint. By his mother's guidance his studies had upraised his emotions to the regions of intellect. The action of his life took place in the abstract world, far from the social sphere which would either have killed him or would have caused untold suffering. He lived in his soul, his intellect. He had laid hold upon human thought by reading; he rose to thoughts that vitalized matter; in the air he felt them and in the sky he read them. He early climbed that ethereal summit where alone he found that delicate nourishment his soul needed; an intoxicating draught, predestining him to woe when that accumulated treasure should clash with the riches of a passion that should rise suddenly in his heart.

If at times Jeanne de Saint-Savin trembled at the thought of that impending storm, she would console herself with thinking of the otherwise sad vocation; for the poor mother knew of no remedy for his sorrow except a lesser one. Her only joys were bitterness.

"He will be a cardinal," she reflected; "he will live in the atmosphere of art; he will make himself its patron. Instead of loving a woman he will love art, and art will not betray him.'

The happiness of this tender mother was constantly restrained by the sorrowful reflections to which Étienne's peculiar position in the family gave rise. The two brothers had passed the age of adolescence without knowing each other; never had they met; neither knew of his rival's existence. The duchess had long hoped for an opportunity, in her husband's absence, of bringing together the two boys, and binding them by some solemn scene that she might infuse her soul into them both. This so longed-for hope had now faded. She had thought that she might interest Maximilien in his brother, by explaining how much he was indebted to him by his renunciation of the rights of the elder son. Now she was far from wishing an intercourse between the brothers, for she feared an encounter far more between them than between the father and the hated son. For Maximilien, who believed in evil only, would have feared lest some time Étienne might desire his forfeited rights, and, fearing this, might have thrown him into the sea with a stone tied to his neck.

No son had ever so little respect for a mother as he. As soon as he could reason he had discovered the small esteem in which the duke held his wife. If the old governor still retained some small politeness in his manner to the duchess, Maximilien, unrestrained by his father, caused his mother numberless griefs.

Therefore old Bertrand was always on the lookout to prevent Maximilien from seeing Étienne, whose very existence was carefully concealed from him. All the castle dependents were the cordial haters of the Marquis de Saint-Sever, the name and title borne by the younger brother, and those who knew of the elder one looked upon him as a reserve, held of God, to be the avenger.

Étienne's future was thus, indeed, doubtful; he might be persecuted by his brother! The poor duchess had no relatives to whom she could confide the life and interests of her cherished son; and might not Étienne, when draped in his

violet robes, blame her if he longed to become a father as she had been a mother? These thoughts and her sorrowful life, so charged with secret melancholy, were like a mortal disease kept at bay by remedies. Her heart craved for a skillful kindness, but those about her were cruelly inexpert in gentleness. What mother's heart would not have been torn at the sight of her eldest son, a man of heart and intellect in whom a noble genius had made itself felt, despoiled of his rights, while the younger, coarse and brutal, without talent, even military talent, was chosen to wear the ducal coronet and perpetuate the race? The house of Hérrouville was casting off its true glory. Incapable of anger, the gentle Jeanne de Saint-Savin could only bless and weep; often would she raise her eyes to heaven, begging an accounting for this strange doom. Her eyes would fill with tears as she thought what would befall her loved one at her death; orphaned and left exposed to the brutalities of a brother having neither faith nor conscience.

Such repressed emotions, her first love unforgotten, so many sorrows hidden in her breast (for she concealed her keenest griefs from her adored child), her joys made bitter, her incessant anxieties had shocked and weakened the springs of life and had planted the seeds of consumption which day by day gathered greater strength. A last blow hastened it. She tried to warn the duke of the results of Maximilien's education, and was roughly repulsed; she found she could do nothing to check the growth of the evil seeds that were germinating in the mind of her youngest child. From this on began a state of such debility, which soon became so apparent as to bring about the appointment of Beauvouloir to the position of leech to the château of Hérrouville and the government of Normandy; so the bonesetter came to live at the castle.

In those days such positions were given to the learned, who thus obtained a maintenance and the leisure so necessary to a studious life and the accomplishment of science. Beauvouloir had long wished for this post, for his wealth and knowledge

had raised up many malignant enemies. Despite the protection of a noble family to whom he had rendered some service in a criminal case, yet only the intervention of the governor of Normandy, at the instance of the duchess, had saved his being brought to trial. The duke had no reason for regret in extending his protection to the old bonesetter; Beauvouloir saved the Marquis de Saint-Sever in an illness so severe that any other physician would have failed. But the malady affecting the duchess dated back too far, and the wounds were too deeply seated to be cured; the more so as each day saw a reopening of the cause. When it was plain that this angel of many sorrows was nearing her end, death was hastened by the gloomy apprehensions of the future.

“What will become of my poor child without me?” was the thought each day recurring like a bitter tide.

Obliged at length to keep her bed, the duchess failed rapidly, for now she was unable to see her son, exiled as he was by the compact with his father, to which he owed his life. His sorrow equaled his mother’s. Inspired by the genius of repressed feeling, Étienne devised a mystical language by which to communicate with his mother. He studied the resources of his voice like as does an opera singer, and often came beneath his mother’s windows to let her hear his mournful voice, when Beauvouloir would inform him by a sign that she was alone. Formerly, as a child, he had comforted his mother with his smiles; now as a poet he caressed her with his melodies.

“Those songs give me life!” said the duchess to Beauvouloir, inhaling the air that wafted those songs to her.

At last came the day when the disowned son was drowned in mourning. Already he had discerned a mysterious correspondence between his emotions and the swell of the ocean. The divination of the impulses of matter, a power which he derived from his occult studies, made this phenomenon more patent to him than to most others. During the fatal night when he was taken to see his mother for the last time, the

ocean was agitated with movements that were full of meaning for him. The heaving waters might be showing that the sea was in travail; the swelling waves rolled in and spent themselves upon the strand with mournful sound like the howling of dogs in misery. Étienne found himself unconsciously saying :

“What is it that the sea wants of me? It quivers and complains like a living thing. My mother has often told me that the ocean was terribly convulsed on the night when I was born. Surely something is about to befall me.”

This thought kept him standing before the window of his cottage, with his eyes fixed alternately upon the trembling light of his mother’s windows and on the troubled, moaning waters. Suddenly Beauvoulair knocked on the door of his room, opened it, and showed a saddened face gloomy with apprehension. “Monseigneur,” said he, “Madame la Duchesse is in so sad a state that she needs must see you. All precautions have been taken that no harm shall happen you in the castle; but we must be very prudent; for, to see her, you will have to pass through the chamber of the duke, the room in which you were born.”

At these words Étienne’s eyes filled with tears, and he said :

“The ocean *did* speak to me.”

Mechanically he allowed himself to be led toward the door of the turret, which gave entrance to the secret way along which Bertrand had come upon the birth of the disinherited son. Bertrand stood there, lantern in hand, awaiting him. Étienne arrived at the library of the Cardinal d’Hérouville, where he waited with the leech the while Bertrand went to unlock the other door, reconnoitring to make sure that the hated son could pass thence without danger.

The duke did not awake.

They went forward with stealthy steps; in that immense château they could hear no sound but the plaintive moans of

the dying woman. Thus the same circumstances were renewed at the death of his mother that attended her giving him birth. The same tempest, the same agony, the same dread of awaking the pitiless giant, who, blessed exception, was now quietly slumbering. As a further precaution, Bertrand lifted Étienne in his arms, intending, if the duke awoke and detected him, to give some excuse as to the duchess' state. Étienne experienced a keen sense of anguish, aroused by the same fears which filled the minds of these faithful servitors; but this emotion prepared him, to some extent, for the sight that met his eyes in that signorial chamber, which he had never revisited since the curse of his father had driven him thence.

On the great bed, where happiness had never been a visitor, he looked for his dear one, but scarcely could he find her, so emaciated was she. White as the laces she wore, with scarce a breath remaining, she collected her whole strength to clasp Étienne's hand, giving him, as before, her whole soul concentrated in one look, as Chaverny had bequeathed all his life to her in his last farewell. Beauvoulour, Bertrand, the child, the mother, the sleeping duke were again there assembled. The same place, same scene, same actors! but here was funereal grief in place of the joys of motherhood—the night of death instead of the morn of life.

At this moment the storm, threatened by the melancholy rollers of the sea since sunset, suddenly broke forth.

"Sweet flower of my life," said the mother, kissing her son, "you came into the world attended by a tempest, and in a tempest I am going from you. Between those storms all life has been storm to me, except the hours in your presence. This is my last joy in my last sorrow. Adieu, my only dear! Farewell, sweet image of two souls that soon shall be reunited! Adieu, my only, my perfect bliss, my one beloved!"

"But let me die with thee!" said Étienne, who had lain down by the side of his mother.

"It were the happier fate!" said she, two tears rolling down her livid cheeks, for, as in the former days, her eyes could pierce the future. "Was he seen to come by any one?" she asked the two men.

At this moment the duke turned in his bed. They all trembled.

"My last joy is even mingled with pain," cried the duchess. "Take him away! Take him away!"

"Mother, rather would I have a moment longer with you, and then die!" said the poor boy, as he fainted by her side.

At a sign from the duchess, Bertrand again lifted Étienne in his arms, and for the last time showing him to his mother, who embraced him with a final glance, he turned to carry him away at a last command from the dying mother.

"Love him well!" said she to the bonesetter and Bertrand; "he is without protectors save you and heaven."

Prompted by the unerring instinct of a mother, which never misleads, she had detected the deep pity felt by the old retainer for the eldest son of a house for which he had the sublime veneration comparable only to that of the Jews for the Holy City, Jerusalem. As for Beauvoulair, the deed between himself and the duchess had long been in force.

The two retainers, deeply moved at seeing their mistress compelled to leave to their care the noble heir, promised by a solemn gesture to be the providence of their young lord; and the mother had faith in that gesture.

The duchess died in the morning, mourned by all the servants in the household, who commented—the only funeral panegyric—as they stood beside her sepulchre: "She was a gracious lady, come down from paradise."

Étienne's sorrow was deep and intense; it was the most lasting of sorrow, a sorrow of silence. No more did he ramble among the rocks; he lost his heart for reading and singing. Whole days would he spend crouched, half hidden in a nook, caring nothing for the severest weather, fastened to

the granite, like a lichen growing upon it ; seldom weeping, lost in one sad thought, as deep, as infinite as the ocean, and, like the ocean, taking myriad forms : terrible, tempestuous, quiet, calm. It was much more than sorrow ; it was a new existence, a dire destiny that doomed this hapless being to never smile more. There are pangs, like unto a blood which spilled into running water will quickly stain the whole current. But the stream, renewed from its source, will reassume its purity ; but in Étienne the font itself was polluted ; each new billow brought its draught of gall.

Bertrand, as he advanced in years, had retained the superintendence of the stables and stud, so as to retain authority in the household. His house was not far from Étienne's cottage ; he was thus enabled to watch over him with unfailing constancy and the childlike willingness of an old soldier. When he spoke with the boy, he set aside his characteristic roughness ; he would gently arouse him, in wet weather, from his sorrowful reveries and cause him to seek shelter in his home. It was his pride to fill the place of the mother, so that if he could not have the love he might yet have constant care. This pity was tenderness. Étienne accepted these attentions of his retainer without complaint or resistance ; but all natural ties were so disrupt that it was impossible for him to give an ardent affection a place in his heart. Mechanically he allowed himself to be protected ; he had become, as it were, a hybrid creature between man and a vegetable, or, might we not say, between man and God. To what can we compare a being to whom all social laws and the false sentiments of the world are unknown ; one who kept his blissful innocence by obeying only his heart's instincts ?

But in spite of his deep melancholy he came to feel the need of loving, of finding another mother, a soul to be one with his soul. Being cut off as he was from civilization by an iron wall, it was most unlikely that he should meet another being flower-like as himself. Constantly seeking that other self to

whom he might confide his feelings and his thoughts, whose life might blend with his life, he at last ended by joining sympathies with the ocean. The sea became to him a thinking, living thing. Ever in attendance on that vast creation, the occult mysteries of which contrast so vividly with those of the land, he deciphered the meaning of many enigmas. Intimate from his infancy with the infinitude of that trackless waste, it and the sky rehearsed to him their poems. To him there was naught of monotony, as to some—all was endless variety.

Like other men whose soul o'ertops the body, his sight was so piercing that it could reach the distant space and seize upon, with wonderful ease and without fatigue, the fleeting tints of light, the passing sheening of the waves. On the days of peaceful calm his eyes could unfold the manifold tints of the sea, which, to him, like a woman's countenance, had its facile expressions. its smiles, ideas, caprices, fancies: here green and sombre, there smilingly blue; anon blending its gleaming lines with the hazy gleam of the horizon, or, again, softly pulsing under clouds of gold. He witnessed glorious displays of loveliness at sunset when the day-star spread its mantle of crimson over the sparkling waves.

For him the noonday sea was gay, sparkling, cheerful when it quivered in reflecting the sun-rays from a thousand polished facets; it spoke to him of a boundless melancholy; it made him weep when it was calm and sad and dimly reflected the dark-gray sky, full-laden with clouds. He had learned the silent speech of that great creation. Its ebb. its flow were, to him, a rhythmical breathing; he knew and felt its inward meaning. No mariner, no storm-foreteller, could predict so unerringly as he the faintest wrath of ocean, the least change of its surface. By the manner of the waves as they surged and fell upon the strand, he could foresee tempests, squalls, hurricanes, and storms, and read the height of distant swells and of the tides.

When night had spread its veil over the sky, he still saw the sea in the gloaming, and talked with it in its twilight mystery. He lived in its fecund life; he felt the tempest in himself when it was angry; he breathed its rage in its hissing breath; how it rushed with its huge billows, dashing against the rocks, fringing them with a thousand liquid ripples. Then he felt himself as free, as intrepid, as valiant as the waves; like them, throwing himself up, rebounding, as they did in tremendous sweep; he, too, could be gloomily silent; like it, he copied its sudden pause. In short, he was wedded to the sea; it was his confidant, his love. In the morning as he trod the glowing sand of the beach and came out on his rocks, he could divine the temper of the ocean at a single glance; he saw landscapes there; there he hovered as an angel from heaven might hover. And when the joyous, elfin, white mists cast their gossamer before him, like a veil before the face of a bride, he would watch their swaying undulations with the delight of a lover, as much entranced by the woman-like coquettishness of the sea, like unto a bride but partly awakened, as a husband would be.

He saw his mother's soul in all things—often he saw her in the clouds: to her he spoke and held communion in celestial visions; sometimes he even heard her voice, saw her heavenly smile; in short, there were times when he had not lost her. God seemed to have given him the power of the hermits of a past day; to have endowed him with some occult sense by which he could penetrate to the heart of all things. Some unknown mental power enabled him to enter further than others into the secrets of the force immortal. His sorrows, his yearnings, were the chains that bound him to the world of spirits; thither he went, armed by his love, to seek his mother; thus he realized the sublime harmonies of ecstasy in the enterprise of Orpheus. He would project himself into futurity or into the heavens, as he would skip from one point of his rocks to another.

Often, as he lay crouching in the niche of some boulder, fantastically delved in the granite cliff, the entrance small as to a kiln, a softened light prevailing as the sunlight filtered itself through some crevice hung with fairest seaside lichens, a genuine sea-bird's nest, often he would fall involuntarily asleep. The sun, his liege lord, would tell him of the hours he had slumbered, by measuring off the time he had been away from the scene—the shells, the pebbles, and the golden strand. Then across a light as glorious as that of heaven, he saw the cities which his books revealed to him; he wandered around, gazing with surprise, but without envy, at courts and kings, at battles, men, and buildings. These dreams of the day made dearer to him his darling flowers, his clouds, his sun, his massive granite cliffs. The more to attach him to his solitary existence, it seemed as if an angel had revealed to him the gulfs of the moral world and the terrible jarring of civilization. He felt that his soul would be torn in the mad ocean of humanity and perish, crushed like a pearl dropped from the coronet of a princess into the muddy street.

II.

HOW THE SON DIED.

In 1617, twenty and more years after the dreadful night when Étienne came upon the scene of this world, the Duke d'Hérrouville, now seventy-six years old, broken, decrepit, half-dead, was sitting at sunset in a great armchair by the Gothic window of his bedroom, at the very spot where his wife had so vainly implored, by the tones of the horn, wasted upon the air, the help of God or man.

You might have taken him for a man new-risen from the tomb. His once energetic features, stripped of their sinister aspect by age and suffering, ghastly in color, well-matching the long fringe of white hair which hung around his bald head, the yellow skull of which seemed softening. Warring fanaticism still gleamed in those yellow eyes, tempered though they now were by more religious sentiment. It was true devotion had left a monastic hue upon the face formerly so hard and stern; and it was tinged with a gentler expression. The glow of the setting sun cast a faint hue of red upon his head, which despite of its infirmities was still vigorous. The feeble body, enwrapped in brown garments, gave, in its heavy attitude and mobility the most vivid impression of a monotonous life, a solitude and dreadful repose, of this man once so full of life, hatred, and activity.

"Enough!" said he to his chaplain.

That venerable old man was reading aloud the Gospel, standing in a respectful manner before his master. The duke, like an old menagerie-lion, which even in its decrepitude is majestic, turned to another white-haired man and said, as he held out a lank arm sprinkled with hair and still sinewy, though vigorless:

"Now it is your turn, bonesetter. How am I to-day?"

"It is well with you, monseigneur; the fever has passed. You will live to see many a long year."

"I would I could see Maximilien here," said the duke with a smile of satisfaction. "My fine boy! He now commands a company of the King's Guard. The Maréchal d'Ancre has looked after my lad, and our gracious Queen Marie is looking out a noble match for him now that he has been made Duke de Nivron. My race will be worthily continued. The boy performed prodigies of valor in the assault on——"

At this moment Bertrand came in with a letter in his hand.

"What is this?" said the old lord hastily.

"A dispatch brought by a courier from the King," replied Bertrand.

"The King and not the Queen-mother!" cried the duke. "What is happening? Have the Huguenots taken up arms again? *Tête-Dieu!*" said the noble, drawing himself up and glancing a flashing eye upon his three companions; "I will at once have my armed men out again, and, with Maximilien by my side, Normandy shall——"

"Sit down, my good lord," said Beauvoulair, uneasy at seeing the duke given up to an excitement so dangerous to one convalescing.

"Read it, Maître Corbineau," said the duke, holding out the missive to his confessor.

The four persons formed a tableau full of instruction to humanity. The man-at-arms, the priest, the leech, all three standing before their liege, who was seated in his huge arm-chair, and stealing sleeping looks the one at the other, presenting an idea; one of those ideas which possess the whole man on the verge of the tomb. In the vivid rays of the setting sun these aged, silent men formed a picture of senile melancholy strong in contrasts. The sombre, solemn room, which had remained unchanged for five-and-twenty years, formed a fit setting for this picture of romance, filled with extinct passions, saddened by death, tinctured with religion.

“ ‘The Maréchal d’Ancre has been killed on the Pont du Louvre by command of the King, and——’ Oh, God ! ”

“ Go on ! ” said the duke.

“ Monsieur le Duc de Nivron—— ”

“ Well ? ”

“ Is dead ! ”

The duke’s head fell upon his breast ; he was silent, save for a deep-breathed sigh. At these words, that sigh, the three old men gazed at each other. It seemed as though the wealthy and noble house of Hérouville was sinking before their eyes like a foundering vessel.

“ The Master above,” said the duke with a fierce upward glance, “ is ungrateful to me. He has forgotten the valiant deeds I have performed for His holy cause.”

“ God has avenged Himself ! ” said the old priest solemnly.

“ Place that man in the dungeon ! ” cried the duke.

“ You can silence me much easier than your conscience.”

The Duke d’Hérouville sank back in thought.

“ My house to perish ! my name extinct ! I will have a son ! ” he said after a lengthy pause.

Dire as was his expression of utter despair, the bonesetter could not repress a smile.

At that instant a song, fresh as evening air, pure as the sky, simple as ocean’s hue, rose above the murmur of the waves, casting its charm over all nature. The sadness of the tone, the melody of the strain, shed abroad, as it were, a perfume over the soul ; its voice rose like a vapor of harmony and filled the air ; it gave forth a balm for every sorrow ; rather it consoled by giving utterance to them. That voice blended so perfectly with the gurgle of the waves that it seemed to arise from the bosom of the waters. That song was sweeter to these old men than the tenderest whisper of love could be in the ears of a young girl. Did it not bring a religious hope into their hearts that seemed like an echo from the distant heaven ?

"What is that?" asked the duke.

"The little nightingale singing," replied Bertrand; "all is not lost for him or for us."

"What is this you call a nightingale?"

"That is the name we have given to my lord's eldest son," said Bertrand.

"My son!" cried the old duke. "Have I then a son? A son to bear my name and to perpetuate it."

He rose to his feet and paced the room; now slowly, now in hasty steps; then, by an imperious gesture, he sent away all but the priest.

The next morning, the duke, leaning on the arm of his aged retainer, Bertrand, wended his way across the hard sands and over the rocks looking for that so-long hated son. He saw him when afar off, under an overhanging cliff, lying basking in the sun; his head lay on a tuft of fine grass, his feet were curled up in a graceful manner. Étienne looked like a swallow at rest.

As soon as the old man made his appearance on the shore, and his steps became faintly audible, Étienne looked around, gave the cry of a startled bird, and disappeared in the face of the rock so suddenly, that, like a mouse darting so quickly into a crevice, we doubt if ever we saw it.

"Eh! By God the Lord! where has he hidden himself?" said the duke, reaching the place where his son had been lounging.

"He is in there," Bertrand made answer, pointing to a narrow cleft, the sides of which were worn and polished by the action of the tide.

"Étienne, my beloved son!" cried the old man.

The hated son replied not.

For a number of hours the duke besought, threatened, implored in turn, but obtained no answer. Sometimes he was silent and leaned with his ear against the rocky opening, but all his feeble hearing could detect were the violent pulsations

of Étienne's heart, which echoed in the sonorous voice of the cavern.

"At any rate he is alive!" said the old father, in a heart-rending voice.

Toward the noon of the day, reduced to sheer despair, he had become a suppliant.

"Étienne," said he, "my beloved Étienne, God has punished me for disowning you. He has taken your brother from me. You now are my only child. You I love more than myself. I now can see the wrong I have done. I know that my blood it is that runs in your veins with your mother's, whose misery was of my making. Come to me; I will try to cause you to forget your cruel treatment; you I will cherish for all that I have lost. Étienne, you are the Duc de Nivron, and after me you will be the Duc d'Hérouville, peer of France, knight of the French orders and that of the Golden Fleece, captain of a hundred men-at-arms, grand-bailli de Bessin, vice-regent of Normandy and its governor, lord of twenty-seven demesnes counting sixty-nine steeples, Marquis de Saint-Sever. You may take to wife the daughter of a prince. You will be the head of the house of Hérouville. Would you see me die of grief? Come! Come to me! or here I stay on my knees until I see you. Your old father begs you, he humbles himself before his son as he would to God."

The hated son paid naught of heed to this speech, bristling with ideas of social vanities which he could not comprehend; his soul was only freshly agitated with impressions of unconquerable terror. He was silent with the agony of fear. Toward evening the old man, after exhausting all formulas of language, all forms of speech, every resource of entreaty, each expression of repentance, was seized by a kind of religious contrition. Down on the sand he knelt and made a vow—

"I swear to build a chapel to Saint-John and Saint-Stephen, the patrons of my wife and son, and to endow a hundred

masses to the Virgin, if God and His saints will give to me the love of my son Étienne, here present."

He remained on his knees, praying in deep humility, with clasped hands. But he found that his son, the one hope of his name, did not come to him, so great tears welled in his eyes, so long dry, and rolled down his so withered cheeks.

Just then, Étienne, hearing no further sound, glided from his grotto like a lizard craving the sun. He saw the tears of the stricken old man, recognized an unfeigned sorrow, and, taking his father's hand, said, as in the voice of an angel—

"O mother! forgive!"

In the fever of his joy the old duke lifted his feeble heir in his arms and carried him, trembling like an abducted girl, to the castle; feeling the quaking of his body, he tried to reassure him, kissing him with such gentleness as one might touch a flower, finding the sweetest tones and gentlest voice he had ever used to soothe him.

"Fore God! you are like my poor Jeanne," he said. "Dear child, tell me what will pleasure you, I will get everything you may desire. Grow strong, be well! I will teach you to ride as filly as gentle as yourself. No one shall contradict or trouble you. By the head of God! all things shall bow to me like reeds before the gale. I give you unlimited power. I myself bow to you as the head of the family."

The father led his son into the state bed-chamber, where his mother's sad life had been spent. Étienne withdrew to the window where life had begun for him, by the signals his mother had wafted thence to him; telling when her persecutor was away, he, who now, without his understanding why, had become his slave, like those gigantic genii placed by the power of a fairy at the command of some young prince. This fairy was Feudality. Seeing once more the great, sombre room where he had first observed the ocean, tears came to his eyes; the recollections of his long misery mingled with the fond remembrance of the pleasure he had found in the only

love that had been vouchsafed to him—maternal love—all rushed together upon his heart and germinated in a poem at once terrible and delightful. The emotions of this youth, accustomed as he was to dwell in fields of ecstasy, as others are to dwell in the excitements of the world, resembled none of the usual feelings of mankind.

“Will he live?” said the old man, amazed at his son’s fragile form, and holding his breath as he bent over him.

“I can live but here,” answered Étienne, who overheard him.

“Well, then, my child, this room is yours.”

“What noise is that?” asked the young man, as he heard the retainers of d’Hérouville gathering in the guard-room, whither the duke had summoned them to present his son.

“Come,” said the father, taking him by the hand and leading him into the great hall.

At this time a duke and a peer with large possessions, holding high offices and the government of a province, lived the life of a sovereign prince; the cadets of his family were eager to serve him. His household had its officers; the first lieutenant of his guards was to him what in our time an aide-de-camp is to a marshal. But a few years later and Cardinal Richelieu had a body-guard. A number of the princes allied to the royal family—the Guises, Condés, Nevers, Vendômes, and others—had pages chosen from amongst the best families, a lingering custom of the days of chivalry. His immense wealth and the antiquity of his Norman race indicated by his name, Hérouville, *id est—herus villæ* (the chief’s house)—had enabled him to imitate the magnificence of many who were in other respects much inferior to him—such, for instance, as the Épernons, Luynes, Balagnys, d’Os, Zamets, who were but parvenus and yet lived as princes. It was, therefore, an imposing spectacle for Étienne to see this assemblage of retainers attached to the service of his father.

The duke seated himself on a chair of state, placed beneath

a *solium* or carved canopy of wood, and raised a few steps upon a kind of dais, from which, in certain provinces, the great lords still rendered sentence in their jurisdiction, a vestige of feudality which was suppressed under Richelieu's reign of authority. These kind of thrones, like those of the wardens' seats in the churches, have now become members of curio-gatherers' collections. When Étienne found himself placed beside his father, the cynosure of all eyes, he shuddered in affright.

"Do not tremble," said the duke, bending his bald head to his son's ear; "these people are but our servants."

Through the lowering light, partly illumined by the setting sun, the beams of which gave a ruddy glow to the leaded panes of the windows, Étienne could descry the bailiff, the captains, the lieutenants-at-arms, with a number of the armed retainers, the chaplain, the secretaries, the doctor, the steward of the house and he of the lands, the ushers, the huntsmen, the game-keepers, the grooms, the valets. Although the people stood in a respectful attitude, caused by the fear the old duke inspired in the most exalted of his retainers, a low murmur of amazed curiosity could be discerned. This sound weighed on Étienne's heart, who for the first time experienced the influence of the heavy atmosphere caused by the breath of a number of persons in a closed room. His senses, accustomed, as they were, to the pure and healthful breezes of the sea, were nauseated so quickly that the delicacy of his organization was made apparent. A horrible palpitation, due, without doubt, to some structural defect in his heart, shook him with oft-repeated blows as his father, showing himself to his servitors as some majestic lion, spoke in the most solemn tones the following address:

"My good friends, this is my son Étienne, my first-born son, my heir presumptive, the Duc de Nivron, on whom our lord the King will doubtless confer the offices of his brother now deceased. I present him to you, that you may acknowl-

edge and obey him as myself. I warn you that should you or others in this province, over which I am governor, ever displease or thwart him, it were better, should it become known to me, that he never had been born. You have heard. Return now to your duties ; God guide you. The funeral of my son, Maximilien d'Hérouville, will take place here on the arrival of his body. For eight days hence the house will go into mourning. Later we will do honor to the accession of the heir, my son Étienne."

"Long live monseigneur ! Long live the Hérouvilles !" shouted the people in a tremendous roar that made the stout walls tremble.

The footmen brought in torches for illumination.

Those huzzas, the glare of lights, the sensations aroused by his father's speech, in addition to what he had already experienced, overcame Étienne. He fell over upon his chair, leaving the womanly hand in his father's broad palm. As the duke, who had signed to his lieutenant-at-arms to approach, was saying : "I am fortunate, Baron d'Artagnon, at being able to repair my loss—come and speak to my son !" he felt an ice-cold hand in his own ; he turned around, and, believing him, dead, gave utterance to such a cry of terror as appalled all there.

Beauvoulair pushed aside the barrier in front of the dais, rushed upon it, took up the youth in his arms, carried him out, and said to his lord :

"You might have been his death by not preparing him for this ceremony."

"He can never beget a child if he is like that !" said the duke, who followed Beauvoulair into the state-chamber, where the leech had laid the young heir upon the bed.

"Well, what about it ?" asked the father.

"It is not serious," the old bonesetter made answer, motioning the meanwhile to Étienne, now restored by a few drops of cordial administered to him upon a small lump of sugar, a

new and precious thing which the apothecaries sold for its weight in gold.

"Take this, old rascal!" said the duke, holding his purse to Beauvouloir, "and care for him as thou wouldst for a king's son. Should he die on your hands, I myself will cook you on a gridiron."

"If you will persist in being so violent, the Duc de Nivron will die, killed by your own act," said the blunt leech. "There, leave him; he will shortly sleep."

"Good-night, beloved," said the old man, kissing his son upon the forehead.

"Good-night, my father," replied the young man, whose voice thrilled the old duke—so named for the first time.

The duke took Beauvouloir by the arm, led him into the next room, and, having pushed him into a niche of the window, he said:

"Now, old rascal, let us understand one another!"

This form of speech, a favorite sign of the duke's graciousness, made the physician, who was no longer a mere bone-setter, smile.

"You know," continued the duke, "that I intend you no hurt. You have twice delivered my poor Jeanne, you cured my son Maximilien of an illness; in short, you are one of my household. Poor Max! I will avenge him; I take it upon myself to slay the man who killed him! The future of the house of Hérouville is now in your hands. We must marry this youngster without delay. Only yourself can know whether there is in that feeble abortion the stuff that can breed a Hérouville. You hear me! What think you?"

"His life, led as it has been on the seashore, has been so chaste and pure that the nature in him is sturdier than it would have been had he lived in your world. But a body so delicate is ever the humble slave of the soul. Monseigneur Étienne must choose a wife for himself; nature must have its work in him and not your will. He will love ingenuously and

he will achieve by his heart's promptings what you wish him to do for the sake of your name. If you marry your son to some proud, ungainly lady of fashion, like a mare he will flee away to his rocky home. More, sure as I am that sudden terror would certainly kill him, I believe, also, that a great emotion would be equally fatal. My advice then is to let him choose for himself, at his own due pleasure, the path of love. Listen, monseigneur, to me ; though you are a great and puissant prince, yet of such matters you know nothing. Give to me your entire, unreserved confidence and you shall have a grandson."

"Let me have a grandson, by whatever sorcery soever, and I will have you ennobled. Yes, difficult, though it may be, I will turn an old villain into an honorable gentleman ; you shall become Beauvouloir Baron de Forcalier. Employ your magic, green or dry, by black or white, by novenas in the church, or your witches' Sabbaths ; I care not by what means so my race continue in a tail male."

"I know of one sorcerer's chapter quite capable of destroying your hopes ; that is, you yourself, monseigneur. I know you. To-day you wish a male lineage at any price ; to-morrow you will want it on but your own conditions ; you will torment your son——"

"God forbid !"

"Well, then, go away from here, visit the Court, where the death of the maréchale and the King's emancipation must have turned everything topsy-turvy, and where you must certainly have business to attend, if only to obtain the marshal's baton that was promised you. Leave Monseigneur Étienne to me ; but pledge me your knightly word of honor to approve what I may do."

The duke grasped the old leech's hand in token of entire confidence and retired to his own chamber.

When the days of a high and powerful noble are numbered, the leech becomes a very important portion of the household,

so that surprise need not be experienced at finding an old bonesetter on such familiar terms with the Duc d'Hérouville. Apart from the illegitimate ties which connected him by marriage to this lordly house, and which was a point in his favor, his sound good sense had so often been proven to the duke that the old leech had now become his most trusty adviser. Beauvouloir was the Coyctier of this Louis XI.

Still, notwithstanding the valuable knowledge he possessed, he never had so much influence over the governor of Normandy, in whom the fires of religious warfare still raged, as had feudality. This faithful retainer was well aware that the prejudices of the noble would prevent the desires of the father.

Learned leech though he was, Beauvouloir plainly understood that to a being of such delicate organization as Étienne marriage must come as a slow and gentle inspiration, which should inspire new powers in his nature, so vivifying it with the fires of love. As he had told the father, to insist on any particular woman would be the stroke of death to the youth. Above all, it was important that the young man should not be alarmed at the thought of marriage, of which he was entirely ignorant, or by letting him see the end that his father had in view. This unconscious poet conceived as yet only the lovely and noble passion of Petrarch for Laura, of Dante for Beatrice. Like his mother, he was all pure love, all soul; the chance to love must be given him; and then the event awaited, not enforced. A command to love would not avail; an order would stop the springs of his life.

Maitre Antoine Beauvouloir was a father; he had a child, a daughter, brought up under the conditions that made her a fitting wife for Étienne. It had been so impossible to foresee the events by which this son, disowned by his father, destined to the priesthood, had become the heir presumptive to the house of Hérouville, so Beauvouloir had never until now

noticed the resemblance in the lives of Étienne and Gabrielle. The sudden idea, far from any latent ambition, had suddenly sprung into being.

His wife, despite his great skill, had died in childbed, leaving this daughter, whose health was so delicate that he thought the mother had bequeathed to her the germs of early death. The leech loved his girl as old men love their only child. His skill and ceaseless attention had given a factitious life to the frail creature; for he cherished her as a gardener cultivates an exotic. No eyes had seen her on his little estate of Forcalier, where she was safe from the dangers of that so troublous time, rendered so by the universal good-will felt for a man to whom gratitude was due from all, and whose scientific powers commanded an awesome respect from the uncultured country-folk.

By attaching himself to the house of Hérouville Beauvouloir had still further increased the immunity he enjoyed in the province; he had thwarted the hostilities of his enemies by his position of influence with the governor. On coming to the castle he had been wise enough not to bring with him the precious flower he kept hidden at Forcalier—an estate more important for its landed value than for the house which stood thereon, and upon which he founded the hope of ultimately settling his daughter. While promising a posterity to the duke and asking a pledge of honor in approval of his doings, he had suddenly thought of Gabrielle, of that gentle girl whose mother had been as completely forgotten of the duke as he had also neglected and lost the memory of his son Étienne.

He awaited the departure of his master before putting his plan into execution, knowing that if it came to the duke's cognizance the enormous difficulties that would be thrown in the way would be nearly insurmountable.

Beauvouloir's house faced the south, standing on the slope of a gentle hill, one of those inclosing the pretty valleys of

Normandy ; on the north it was sheltered by a thick wood ; high walls and clipped hedges and deep dykes made the inclosure of impenetrable seclusion. The garden was laid out in a succession of terraces descending to the river, which watered the thicket at the bottom, where a high bank between thick hedges made a natural embankment. These shrubs formed a concealed walk, led by the meanderings of the sinuous stream, which the willows, oaks, and beeches made as sheltered as a woodland glade. It formed a sylvan retreat, a sanctuary of the grove.

From the house to this bank stretched the rich verdure peculiar to the soil : a lovely green slope bordered by a fringe of foreign trees, the varied hues of which formed a background of exquisite color. There the silvery tints of a pine showed out against the darker green of a number of alders ; here, before a group of stately oaks, a slender poplar lifted its swaying head ; farther down the weeping-willows drooped their pale foliage between the burly, sombre walnut-trees. This copse afforded shelter from the sun to the occupants of the mansion, from thence to the path by the river.

The facade of the house, in front of which was a terrace-walk of yellow gravel, was shaded by a wooden veranda overgrown with creeping vines, which, in this month of May, were twining and tossing their blossoms up to the second-floor windows.

Without being really extensive the garden was made to so appear by the planning of it ; and points of view, very cleverly contrived through the undulations of the ground, overlooked the valley where the eye could wander at will.

Thus as her instinctive fancy would lead, Gabrielle could either seek the solitude of a sheltered nook where nothing but the thick grass, the deep blue of the sky above the tree-tops, or ascending a knoll her eyes could roam into the distance, following the many shaded green lines from the brilliant colors of the foreground to the purple depths of the horizon,

where they faded into the blue ocean of the air, or in the hazy mountain clouds floating around.

Tended by her grandmother and served by her former nurse, Gabrielle Beauvouloir never left her modest home but for the parish church, the steeple of which crowned the summit of the hill ; she was always escorted thither by her grandmother, nurse, and her father's valet. Thus had she grown up until seventeen in the blissful ignorance, which the scarcity of books allowed a girl to retain without any appearance of being extraordinary, at a time when an educated woman was considered a phenomenon. The house had been to her as a convent, save only that here was more freedom, less enforced prayers ; it was a retreat in which she had dwelt under the eye of a pious old woman and the protection of her father, the only man she had ever known. This utter solitude, seeming necessary from her birth by the apparent frailty of her constitution, had been carefully maintained by Beauvouloir.

As Gabrielle grew up, this constant care and pleasant surroundings had indeed strengthened and built up her frail system. Still her wise father did not hide from himself the weakness of the body, and the strong power of the soul, revealed to him by seeing the pearly tints around his daughter's eyes and the flush that arose as her emotions overcame her. These indications made plain to him in a manner which his great experience made him understand. Beside this, Gabrielle's celestial beauty gave him cause to fear the deeds of violence far too common in these times of sedition and heresy. Thus, many reasons had induced the good man to deepen the shadows and increase the solitude surrounding his daughter, whose sensitive nature was a constant cause of alarm ; a passion, abduction, a shock of any kind might cause her death.

Though reproof was scarcely ever needed, a word of censure would crush her ; it remained in the depths of her heart, it brooded there and gave rise to meditative melancholy ; she would turn away weeping and weep for long. Thus her moral

education required as much tender care as her physical training. The old bonesetter had been compelled to cease telling his daughter such long stories, as children love; the impressions they caused her were too vivid and lasting. So, wise through long practice, he tried to develop her body, to deaden the shocks the soul so severely dealt it. Gabrielle was life and love to her father, his sole desire; he never hesitated to procure aught that would further the results he aimed at. He kept from her all knowledge of books, pictures, music, and all those creations of art that could excite her mind. With his mother's aid he interested Gabrielle in manual exercises. Tapestry, sewing, lace-making, the culture of flowers, housewifely duties; in short, the most humble of tasks were this charming child's daily fare. Beauvouloir bought for her handsome spinning-wheels, richly carved chests, fine carpets, the pottery of Bernard de Palissy, tables, prie-Dieus, handsomely wrought chairs covered with precious stuffs, embroidered linens, and choice jewels. With the subtle instinct of the father, the old man always chose his gifts from the works of that fantastic kind called arabesque, which, as it cannot appeal either to the soul or the senses, speaks to the mind only by its fantastical creation.

So, strangely enough, the life which the hatred of a father had imposed upon Étienne d'Hérouville, paternal affection had ordained for Gabrielle. In both these children the soul was consuming the body; and without an absolute solitude, ordained by cruel fate for the one and for the other by, as it might be said, scientific love. Each were like to succumb—he to terror, she to the weight of a too great passion of love. Alas, Gabrielle was not born in a land of heath and gorse, amid the stern aspects of an arid nature, such as have been given by great painters as the background to their Virgins; Gabrielle lived in a rich and fertile valley. Beauvouloir could not away with the harmonious charms of the natural groves, the graceful grouping of the flowers, the cool softness

of the grassy lawns, the love expressed in the intertwining of the climbing plants.

Such living poems speak their own language, heard rather than comprehended by Gabrielle, who abandoned herself to vague and dreamy visions under the leafy shade; across the hazy ideas, suggested by her continuous study of this beauteous landscape, observed in every aspect given it by the changing seasons and a marine atmosphere, in which the fogs of England died away amid the sunshine of France, there arose within her soul a distant light which dawned on her mind, the aurora of a dawn which pierced the darkness in which her father kept her.

Beauvoulair had not withdrawn his daughter from the influence of divine love; to her admiration was added the adoration of the Creator; she had sprung into this first path open to the feelings of womanhood. She loved God; she loved Jesus, the Holy Virgin, and all the saints; she loved the church and its pomp of splendor; she was a Catholic after the manner of Saint Theresa, who found in her Saviour an eternal spouse, an everlasting marriage. Gabrielle gave herself up to this passion of strong souls with so touching a simplicity that she might have disarmed the most brutal seducer by the naïve innocence of her language.

Whither would this holy ignorance lead her? How teach a mind as pure as the waters of a limpid lake that has ever reflected but the azure of the blue sky? What image should be painted on that virgin canvas? About what tree would this morning-glory cluster? No father has ever asked himself these questions without an inward shudder.

At this moment the good old man was slowly riding homeward on his mule along the road from Hérouville to Ourscamp, the village near which Forcalier lay, as if to spin it out to all eternity. His infinite love for his daughter had suggested a bold scheme to his mind. One man alone of all the world could make her happy, that one was Étienne. Most

assuredly the son, the angelic child of Jeanne de Saint-Savin, and the guileless daughter of Gertrude Marana were twin beings. Any other woman would alarm and kill the heir of Hérrouville; and Gabrielle, so Beauvouloir argued, would perish in the arms of any man other than Étienne—to whom sentiment and manner had given a virgin delicacy. Certainly the poor leech had never dreamed of such a thing; it seemed that Chance had forwarded and ordained this union. But, in the reign of Louis XIII., who would dare to lead a d'Hérrouville to marry the daughter of a bonesetter of Normandy? And yet from this marriage alone was it possible that the posterity demanded by the duke could proceed.

Nature had destined these two rare beings for each other; they had been marvelously brought together of God by an arrangement of events, while human ideas and social laws dug an impassable chasm between them. Although the old man thought that he herein traced the finger of God, also despite the promise he had obtained from the duke, he was seized by such a grip of alarm, as he thought of that ungovernable temper, that he made a pause as he came to the summit of the hill above Ourscamp, whence could be seen the smoke of his own chimneys among the trees of his orchard. Again he changed his mind, as the thought of his illegitimate relationship arose once more to his mind; might not this circumstance have much influence over his master's mind? Then, having decided, his mind fully made up, Beauvouloir placed his confidence in the chances of life; maybe the duke might die before the marriage—beside were there not precedents? Françoise Mignot, a Dauphiné peasant-girl, had but recently married the Maréchale de l'Hôpital; the son of the Con-
nétable Anne de Montmorency had married Diane, daughter of Henri II. and a lady of Piedmont named Philippa Duc.

While deliberating thus, and his paternal affection measured all the probabilities and calculations of good and evil, striving to foresee the future by studying its features, Gabrielle was

walking in the garden and picking flowers for a vase wrought by that illustrious potter, who did for his glazed clay what Benvenuto Cellini did for metal. Gabrielle had placed one of these vases, decorated in relief with animals, on a table in the centre of the hall; she was filling it with flowers to both pleasure her grandmother and express her own thoughts.

The noble Limoges vase was filled, arranged, and placed upon the handsome table-cover, and Gabrielle was saying to her grandmother: "See, then!" when Beauvoulair came in. The girl rushed into the arms of her father. After these first effusions of affection, she wanted him to admire the posy; but the leech, after taking a glance at it, cast upon her such a searching look that she blushed.

"It is high time," said he to himself, understanding the language of these flowers, each of which must have been studied as to form and color, so as to be given its proper effect in the nosegay.

Gabrielle remained standing, quite unheeding the spray she had begun on her tapestry. As he looked again at his daughter, who here—under the dark roof-tree of this chamber, hung with leather and furnished in ebony, with heavy silk curtains, a lofty fireplace, in a pleasant diffusing light—still remained all his own, the tears arose in the father's eyes, furrowed his cheeks, which rarely wore a serious aspect, and fell upon his shirt, which, as was the fashion of that time, his open doublet disclosed to view above his breeches. (A father who loves his daughter always wishes to keep her young.) He threw off his old felt hat, decorated with a cock's red feather, and rubbed his hand over his bald head.

Again he looked at his daughter. He felt the tears in his eyes and hastily wiped them away. He who can see, without deep pain, his daughter fall under the yoke of another man, certainly does not rise to a higher sphere, he descends to lowest space.

"What ails you, my son?" said his old mother, taking off

her spectacles, seeking the cause of his silence in the attitude which had puzzled her.

The physician signed to his mother to observe his daughter, and nodded his head with satisfaction, as who should say: "What a sweet creature!"

What father but would have felt with Beauvouloir all his emotion on seeing the young girl as she stood in the Norman dress of that time? Gabrielle wore the bodice pointed before and square behind, which the Italian painters invariably, or nearly so, give to their saints and madonnas. This elegant corselet, made of sky-blue velvet, sheeny as a dragon-fly, inclosed the bust, fitting her closely, and compressing it, daintily modeling the outline it seemed to form; it displayed the mould of her shoulders, her back, and waist, as precisely as a drawing made by a talented draughtsman, and was finished around the throat with an oval curve, trimmed at the edges with an embroidery in fawn-colored silk, exposing to the view enough of the beauty of the bare throat as was needed to show the loveliness of her womanhood, but not enough to awaken desire. A full skirt of fawn-colored stuff continued the lines already drawn by the velvet waist and fell to her feet in narrow flattened pleats.

Her figure was so slender that she appeared tall; her arms were pendent at her side, with the inertia given the limbs by deep meditation. Standing thus, she was a living model of those ingenuous works of statuary, for which a taste prevailed just then, which claim our admiration for the harmony of their lines, being straight without stiffness, and for a firmness of design which does not preclude vitality. No swallow skimming past the window at dusk could display a more delicate outline of shape.

Gabrielle's face was thin, but not meagre; her forehead and throat showed the marbling of fine blue veins, tinting the skin, so delicately transparent, that one could fancy that the flowing blood could be seen within. This extreme whiteness

was faintly tinged with pink on the cheeks. Her hair, lying beneath a little, blue velvet bonnet strung with pearls, fell over her temples like two streams of gold, sparkling in wavy curls around her shoulders, which it failed to hide. The warm tones of this silky hair enhanced the whiteness of her neck, and added yet more to the purity of that so pure face an exquisite brightness. The eyes, long and as if compressed beneath their lids, harmonized most gracefully with the daintiness of her head and figure; their pearl-gray tint was bright without being vivid; candid without passion.

The lines of the nose might have seemed cold, like a steel blade, but for the rosy nostrils, the expressiveness of the motion of which seemed out of keeping with that chaste and dreamy brow, often startled, oftener mirthful, ever loftily serene. An alert little ear attracted the eye by betraying itself beneath the small bonnet and between two pretty locks of hair, and displaying a ruby ear-drop in sharp contrast with the ivory-like neck. This was not the Norman beauty which abounds in flesh, nor was it Southern beauty—passion magnifying matter; nor yet French beauty, as fugitive as its own expressions; nor the beauty of the North, cold and melancholy as the pole itself; it was the deep seraphic beauty of the Catholic church, supple as rigid, severe as tender.

“Where could one find a prettier duchess?” said Beauvouloir to himself, gazing on his daughter with delight. As she stood there, slightly bending her neck to watch the flight of a bird outside the window, he could only compare Gabrielle to a gazelle pausing to listen to the ripple of the brooklet, at which it is about to slake its thirst.

“Come and perch here,” said Beauvouloir, tapping his knee and signing to Gabrielle, letting her know that he had something to whisper her.

Gabrielle understood and came. She lighted upon his knee with the grace of a gazelle, slipped her arms around his neck and, thus doing, crumpled his ruff.

"Tell me of what you were thinking when you gathered those flowers," he said. "You never made a more charming nosegay."

"Oh, of so many things," said she. "As I looked at the flowers made for us, I wondered for whom we were made; who are they that look at us? You are my wise father, so I can tell you all I think; you, knowing so much, can explain all. I have within me a sort of force that wants to exercise itself; I struggle against something. When the sky is gray I seem content; I am sad but calm. When the day is fine and the flowers give scent, and I am sitting out there on my bench among the jasmine and woodbine, something I feel within me that rises up in surges against my stillness. Ideas come into my mind that seem to strike me and fly away like those swallows before the window; I cannot grasp them. Well, and when I have made a nosegay, arranging the colors as they are in tapestry, when the red contrasts with the white, when the greens and the browns fall across each other, when it is full of life and the breeze blows through it, when there is a medley of scents and a tangle of bloom—well, then I, too, am happy; that harmony echoes in my heart, as in church when the organ sounds and the priests respond, and two distinct strains intermingle, the human voices and the organ; then, again, I am happy; it rings through my soul; I pray with a warmth that stirs my blood."

As he listened to his daughter, Beauvoulair looked at her with questioning eyes, eyes that seemed almost dull from the rushing of his thoughts, as the smooth whirl of a cascade seems to be motionless. He raised the veil of flesh, hiding the secret springs by which the spirit acts upon the body; he studied the various symptoms which his experience had taught him to note in people committed to his care; he compared them with those he could discern in this fragile body, the framework of which alarmed him by its delicacy, as the milk-white skin troubled him by its lack of substance. He

tried to bring the teachings of his science to bear upon the future of this seraphic child, and he felt giddy in finding himself, so to speak, on the brink of a dreadful abyss. The voice too vibrant, the breast too slender, filled him with anxiety, and he questioned himself after interrogating her.

"You are unhappy here!" he cried at last, prompted by a final thought which summed up his meditation.

She faintly bowed her head.

"By God's help then," said he with a sigh, "I will take you to the Château d'Hérouville; there you may bathe in the sea, and that will strengthen you."

"Is this true, father? Say you are not laughing at your Gabrielle! I have longed so for a sight of the castle, the men-at-arms, the captains, and monseigneur."

"Yes, my daughter, you shall really go there. Your nurse and Jean may accompany you."

"And soon?"

"To-morrow," said the old man, who hurried into the garden to hide his agitation from his mother and child.

"God is my witness," he cried to himself, "that it is not ambition that prompts this move. My daughter to save, poor little Étienne to be made happy—these are my only motives."

Even while he thus questioned himself, he felt in his inmost conscience a genuine satisfaction that, should his project be successful, Gabrielle would one day become the Duchesse d'Hérouville. There is always a man in the father.

He walked about for a long time, went into supper, and the whole evening after took delight in gazing upon his daughter in the midst of the soft and quiet poesy in which he had surrounded her; before she went to bed they all—the grandmother, the nurse, himself, and Gabrielle—knelt together to repeat the evening prayer, when he added:

"Let us pray God for his blessing on my undertaking."

The eyes of the grandmother, who was aware of his inten-

tions, were moist with unshed tears. Gabrielle's face showed her happiness, albeit somewhat curious. The father trembled; so much he dreaded some disaster.

"After all," said his mother to him, "there cannot be any real cause for alarm. The duke would never kill his grandchild."

"No," he answered, "but he might force her to marry some brute of a baron, which would be her death."

The next day Gabrielle, mounted on an ass, followed by her nurse on foot and her father on his mule, a man leading two horses laden with their baggage, set out for the castle of Hérouville, which the caravan reached at nightfall. In order to keep this journey a secret, Beauvouloir had taken cross-roads and bridle-paths, starting early in the morning, and had brought provisions to avoid taking meals at the inns. The party arrived after dark, without being perceived by any of the retainers belonging to the castle, and proceeded to the little cottage inhabited so long by the hated son, where Bertrand, the only person the leech had taken into his confidence, was awaiting them. The old man-at-arms helped the nurse and manservant to unload the horses and carry in the baggage and to help settle Beauvouloir's daughter in Étienne's former dwelling. When Bertrand saw Gabrielle he was amazed.

"I could believe I see madame, her mother!" said he. "She has the same fair skin, the same golden hair; the old duke will surely love her."

"God grant it," said Beauvouloir. "But will he acknowledge his own blood when it is mingled with mine?"

"He cannot dispute it," replied Bertrand. "Ofttimes have I waited for him outside the door of the Belle Romaine, who lived in the Rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine. The Cardinal de Lorraine was compelled to give her up to monseigneur, ashamed at being insulted by the mob when seen leaving her house.

"Monseigneur, who at that time was only in his twenties,

will well recollect that affair. He was a bold youth, I may now tell you, and the leader of the mob."

"All that is forgotten by him," said Beauvouloir. "He knows my wife is dead, but I misdoubt if he remembers that I have a daughter."

"Two old sailors like you and me ought surely be able to bring the ship into port," said Bertrand. "After all, suppose the duke should get in a rage and take his revenge out of our carcasses, they have served their time."

Before starting for Paris the Duc d'Hérrouville had forbidden every one attached to the castle, under heavy penalties, to go down to the shore where Étienne had passed his life, unless the Duc de Nivron himself should desire them. This order had been suggested by Beauvouloir, who had pointed out to the duke the wisdom of letting Étienne be still the master of his solitude; it thus assured to Gabrielle and her nurse an absolute privacy in the little domain, beyond which he forbade them going unless by his permission.

Étienne had remained during these two days in his own room, the great state-chamber, meditating on his tenderest reminiscences. In that bed his mother had slept; his thoughts took in that terrible scene attending his birth, when Beauvouloir had saved two lives. She had talked of her sorrows to this furniture; she it was who had used it; often had she gazed upon those draperies; many times had she gone to that window to call or make a sign to her poor boy, now the master of the castle.

Alone in this room, whither the last time he had gone by stealth, taken by old Beauvouloir to embrace his dying mother, he fancied that she lived again, that she spoke to him, that he listened to her; he drank deep of that spring which never runs dry, whence so many songs have issued like the *Superflumina Babylonis*.

The day after Beauvouloir's return he went to see his young

master, gently reproving him for having stayed shut up in that room and not leaving it, pointing out to him the danger of a prison life after having passed his former life in the free, open air.

"But this room is vast, the spirit of my mother dwells here," said Étienne.

The doctor prevailed, however, by the kindly influence of affection, in persuading Étienne to promise to go out each day, either on the seashore or in the fields and meadows, which were as yet unknown to him. Despite of this, Étienne, absorbed in his thoughts, remained yet another day at his window, watching the sea, which afforded him from that point of view so many varied aspects that never could he remember its being so beautiful. His meditations were mingled with the reading of Petrarch, one of his favorite authors—the one whose poems went nearest the young man's heart as a monument of love and constancy. Étienne felt that he had not within him the stuff for several passions. He could love only once; and in one sole way. Should that love be deep, like all that is pure, it must also be calm in its expression, sweet and true as the Italian poet's sonnets.

At sunset this child of solitude began to sing in that marvelous voice which had so suddenly entered, a harbinger of hope, in the dull ears of his father. He expressed his melancholy by variations on an air, repeating the same again and yet again, like the nightingale. This air, ascribed to the late King Henry IV., was not the so-called air "*de Gabrielle*," but one very superior in its expression of infinite tenderness. Admirers of ancient compositions will recognize the words, written by the great King to this air, which were most probably taken from some old folk-song, of those that soothed him in his cradle rocked among the mountains of Béarn.

"Viens, Aurore,
Je t'implore

Je suis gai quand je te vois ;
 La Bergère
 Qui m'est chère
 Est veinneille comme toi.
 De rosée
 Arrosée
 Le rose a moins de fraîcheur ;
 Une hermine.
 Est moins fine ;
 Le lys a moins de blancheur."

(Dawn draw nigh,
 So pray I ;
 It is joyous thee to see ;
 The maiden fair
 My own dear
 Is rosy like to thee.
 Yea, though the rose
 Dew-sprinkled grows
 It still is not so sweet ;
 Ermine has less
 Of pureness ;
 Her whiteness the lily must greet.)

After having thus ingenuously expressed his thoughts in song, Étienne looked out upon the sea and said to himself:

"There is my betrothed ; my one, my only love !" Then he sang two other lines of the ballad :

"Elle est blonde
 Sans seconde !"

(She is fair
 Beyond compare !)

repeating it as striving to express the imploring poetry which abounds in the heart of a timid young man, brave only when alone. That undulating song, sung, resung, broken into, with fresh outbursts, dying at last in a final tremulo which grew

fainter like the lingering vibrations of a bell, was like a dream. At this instant a voice, which he thought must have arisen siren-like from the sea, a woman's voice, repeated the air he had just sung, but with the hesitation of a person to whom the charm of music is for the first time revealed. He recognized in it the uncertain ventures of a heart awaking to the poetry of harmony. Étienne, to whom the long study of song had taught the language of sound, in which the soul finds greater resources than in speech to express its thoughts, could divine the shy amazement revealed in this attempt.

With what religious and subtle admiration did he listen ! The quietude of the evening allowed him to hear every sound, and he thrilled at the distant rustle of a long trailing dress. It astonished him—whom every emotion produced by terror put upon the verge of death—to find in his heart a sense of balm, as it were, healing to his soul, like as of old it had done on the approach of his mother.

“Come, Gabrielle, my child,” said the voice of Beauvouloir, “I forbade you to stay upon the seashore after sunset. You must come in, my daughter.”

“Gabrielle,” muttered Étienne. “Oh ! the pretty name !”

Beauvouloir came to him shortly afterward, and roused his young master from one of those meditations which resemble dreams.

It was quite dark, but the moon was rising.

“Monseigneur,” said the old man, “you have not been out again to-day ; it is not wise of you.”

“And I,” answered Étienne, “may I go out on the strand after sunset.”

The double meaning of this speech, a genuine semblance of a first desire, caused the leech to smile.

“You have a daughter, Beauvouloir ?”

“Yes, monseigneur, the child of my old age ; my darling girl. Monseigneur, the duke, your father, instructed me so strictly to watch over your precious life that, as I could not

any longer go to Forcalier, where she was, I have brought her here to my great regret. To conceal her from all eyes I have housed her in the cottage that monseigneur used to occupy. She is so delicate that I fear every kind of sudden shock or excitement; I have not taught her anything either, for knowledge would have killed her."

"She knows nothing," said Étienne, surprised.

"She has all the talents a good housewife should have, otherwise she has lived as the plants live. Ignorance, monseigneur, is as sacred as knowledge. Science and ignorance are but two ways of living; each enfolds the soul as does a winding-sheet. Learning has been your life; ignorance will save my daughter. Pearls well hidden escape the diver's eye, and live happy. I can only compare my Gabrielle to a pearl; her cheek has its translucence; her soul its purity; and up to now Forcalier has been her shell."

"Come with me," said Étienne, drawing on a cloak. "I will walk by the sea, the air is soft."

Beauvoulair and his young master walked on in silence until they arrived at a spot where a beam of light, which escaped through the chinks of the fisherman's house, had traced a path of gold across the sea.

"I don't know how to express the feelings that that light cast upon the waters excites in me," said Étienne to the leech. "So often have I watched the window of that room until the light was extinguished," he added, pointing to his mother's chamber.

"Delicate through Gabrielle may be," said Beauvoulair cheerfully, "it will not harm her to walk with us; the night is warm, the air has no dampness. I will fetch her; but show prudence, monseigneur."

Étienne was too timid to propose accompanying Beauvoulair into the house; beside, he was in that half-somnolent state into which we are thrown by the influx of thoughts and sensations given birth by the dawn of passion.

Being conscious of greater freedom when he was alone, he cried out, as he looked on the moon-lit sea—

“The ocean has passed into my soul!”

The sight of the lovely living statuette which was now come out to meet him, made silvery by the moon and enveloped in its light, redoubled the palpitations of his heart, and yet it was not painful.

“My child,” said Beauvoulair, “this is my lord.”

In a moment poor Étienne longed for the colossal figure of his father, he would have rejoiced to have appeared strong and not puny. Every vanity of love and manhood pierced his heart like so many barbs; he remained in moody silence, for the first time conscious of his imperfections.

Embarrassed by the salutation of the young girl, which he awkwardly returned, he stayed beside Beauvoulair, with whom he talked as they walked along the shore; but presently Gabrielle’s timid and pleasant manner gave him courage, and he ventured to address her. The incident of the song was entire chance-work. Nothing had been prearranged by the leech; he thought that two hearts that had been kept innocent by solitude would turn to love with a natural simplicity. Gabrielle’s refrain of the song thus became the opening subject of the conversation.

During this walk Étienne experienced, which every man has done when first love has transferred the elements of life into another being, a sense of physical buoyancy. He proffered his services in teaching Gabrielle to sing. The poor youth was so glad of his ability to show himself her superior in any respect, in the eyes of this so pretty young girl, that he thrilled with joy when she acquiesced.

Just then the moonlight fell on Gabrielle and enabled him to trace certain vague points of resemblance between her and his late mother. Like Jeanne de Saint-Savin, Beauvoulair’s daughter had a supple, delicate figure. As in the duchess suffering, and hope defeated, had given an intangible grace, so

had it also in Gabrielle. Her dignity was such as is peculiar to those on whom the world of society has had no effect, in whom everything is pleasing, but everything is unaffected. But more than this, in Gabrielle there ran the blood of the handsome Italian which had revived in the third generation, giving to the girl the strong passions of a courtesan in a soul of purity; hence a spiritual look, which flashed in her eyes, that radiated light, so to speak, giving her movements the glint of living flame. Beauvoulair was astonished on noticing this, which in our time may be called the phosphorescence of the soul. The leech looked upon it as a sign of death.

By chance Étienne happened to turn as the girl, like a startled crane peering forth from its nest, was stretching out her neck. Screened by her father, Gabrielle had every chance of studying Étienne at her pleasure; her expression indicated as much curiosity as delight, of friendliness as of ingenuous courage. Étienne to her did not appear sickly, only delicate; she thought him so like herself that she was not at all alarmed at this new lord and master. Étienne's pallid complexion, his slender hands, his languid smile, his hair arranged in two flat bands, ending in curls on the lace of his large white ruff, his noble forehead, lined with premature wrinkles; all these contrasts of luxury and sorrow, power and littleness, pleased her; for did it not appeal to her natural instinct of maternal protection, itself the germ of love? Maybe it was to strengthen the need, that every woman feels, to find some sign in the man she means to love which shall proclaim him different to every other. In both of them new ideas, fresh sensations, were welling up in each heart with such an abundant force that it enlarged their souls. They remained overcome with silence, for sentiments are the less demonstrative as the depth is greater. All lasting love begins in dreamy meditation. It was well that these two beings should first see each other by the soft rays of the moon, so they might not be too suddenly dazed by the rich effulgence of all-glorious love; so it was

fitting that they should meet upon the shore of Old Ocean—image of the immensity of their feelings. They parted each filled with the other, each fearing they had failed to please.

From his lofty window Étienne gazed down upon the lights burning in the house that held Gabrielle. In that hour of hope, combined with fear, the young poet found a new meaning in Petrarch's sonnets. Now, had he seen Laura—that exquisite, delightful one, pure and radiant as a sunbeam, as intelligent as an angel, weak as a woman? Here was the clue to his twenty years of study; he now comprehended the mystic union of all beauty; he learned how much of woman underlay the poetry he adored; he had, in fact, for long been in love without being aware thereof; his whole past was merged into the emotions of that so lovely night. Gabrielle's likeness to his mother seemed a revelation of divine order. His love for the one was no betrayal of the love due the other, rather it was the continuation of maternity. He thought of the young girl asleep in the cottage, with the same feelings with which his mother must have contemplated him when it was occupied by himself. It was another similitude, another link between the past and present.

The saddened features of Jeanne de Saint-Savin were pictured before him on the gloomy background of the clouds of memory; again he saw her feeble smile, heard her gentle voice; he bowed his head and wept.

The lights in the house were extinguished. Once more Étienne sang the sweet ballad with an added expression, and, from afar, Gabrielle made refrain. The young girl was also making her first excursion into the charming land of amorous ecstasy. This answering echo filled Étienne's heart with joy; the blood coursing through his veins imparted a strength he had never before known; love had given him vigor. The frail in body alone can realize the voluptuous joy which this regeneration affords. The poor, the suffering, the ill-treated have joys ineffable; to them little things are worlds. Étienne

was tied by numberless bands to the inhabitants of the Dolorous City. His recent aggrandizement had caused him terror only; now love shed in him its balm of strength; he was in love with Love.

Betimes in the morning of the next day Étienne hurried to his old house, where Gabrielle, urged by a curiosity and an eagerness she did not confess to herself, had already curled her hair and put on her handsomest dress. Both were filled with an eager desire to see each other again—perhaps both felt an equal dread of the interview. As for Étienne, you may be sure, he had chosen his finest lace, his richest embroidered mantle, his violet velvet trunks; in short, he was appareled in the handsome style which we connect in our memory when we think of the times of Louis XIII., a face oppressed with pain in the midst of splendor, like as Étienne had hitherto been. Nor were the clothes the only thing in which the king and his subject resembled each other. Étienne, as Louis XIII., had many contrasting sensibilities: chastity, melancholy, intangible but real sufferings, chivalrous timidity, a fear of not expressing a feeling in all its purity, the dread of too abruptly entering upon joys (which all great souls prefer to delay), a sense of the burden of power, a sense of obedience characteristic of those who are indifferent to their material interests, but full of love for all that a truly noble genius has called the *Astral*.

Wholly without any knowledge of the world, Gabrielle was yet well aware that the daughter of a country bonesetter, the humble owner of Forcalier, was too far below Monseigneur Étienne, Duc de Nivron and heir of the house of Hérouville, to allow of them being on equal terms; she knew not of the elevating power of love. This artless being had no thought of an ambition to place herself in a position, which any other damsel would have eagerly embraced; she only divined the obstacles.

She loved without knowing the meaning of love, she saw herself separated from her happiness, her only thought was how to become possessed of it, as a child longs for the golden grapes hanging high above its head. To a girl whose emotions were stirred at the sight of a flower, and who had learned of love in the sombre chants of the liturgy, how inestimably sweet must have been the feelings aroused in her breast the previous night by the fragile aspect of her young lord, which seemed to her a comfort. But during the night Étienne had become magnified in her eyes; she made of him her hope, her strength; she had placed him on so high a pinnacle that she despaired of reaching him.

"May I have your permission to call upon you at times; to enter your domain?" said the duke, casting down his eyes.

Seeing him so humble, so timid—for he, on his side, had deified Beauvoulair's daughter—Gabrielle felt herself embarrassed by the sceptre he had given her. And yet she was profoundly touched and flattered by this homage. Only women can say what seduction there is to them in this respect shown so surely. Yet she feared to deceive herself, and, curious as was the first woman, she longed to know it all.

"Did you not yesterday offer to teach me music?" she answered, hoping that music could be made the pretext for their meeting.

Had the poor child but known what Étienne's existence had been, she would carefully have avoided suggesting that doubt. To him speech was the direct reflection of his mind, and Gabrielle's words caused him much pain. He had come with a heart surcharged, fearing some cloud over his day, and he was welcomed with a doubt. His joy was dimmed, he was plunged back into his solitude, he no longer found his desert graced with flowers.

With a presentiment of sorrow, characteristic of the angel sent to alleviate it, doubtless the charity of heaven, she instantly recognized the pain she had given. She was so stricken

by her fault that she prayerfully asked God for assistance in laying her heart bare before Étienne, for she well knew the biting pang caused herself by a reproach or a stern look ; she artlessly disclosed to him the clouds that had arisen in her soul—the golden drappings of her affection's dawn. One tear of Gabrielle's turned Étienne's pain to joy, and he inwardly accused himself of tyranny. It was fortunate for them that they thus early gauged each other's heart ; they might for the future avoid a thousand shocks which would have bruised them.

Étienne, feeling the necessity of intrenching himself behind an occupation, led Gabrielle to a table before the little window where he had known so much sorrow, and where henceforth he was to admire a flower more daintily beautiful than any he had yet seen. There he opened a book, over which they bent their heads, their locks intermingling.

These two, so strong in soul, so weak in body, become beautiful by the grace of suffering, made a touching picture. Gabrielle knew naught of coquetry ; when he bade, she looked at him ; the soft beam of their eyes only ceased their gaze by an impulse of modesty. She had the joy of telling Étienne what pleasure his voice gave her as he sang ; little heed gave she to him as he spoke to her of the intervals and the relative value of the notes ; she listened, yes, to *him*, but she forgot the melody in the instrument, the ideal was lost in the form ; artless flattery that first comes to true love.

Gabrielle thought Étienne handsome ; she needs must feel the velvet of his mantle and touch the lace of his ruff. As for Étienne, he was transformed under the creative light of those sparkling eyes ; they infused his being with a fruitful sap, which glinted in his eyes, shone on his forehead, revived, recreated him inwardly, renewed his spirit ; so that he not only did not suffer harm by these emotions, but, contrariwise, was strengthened thereby. Happiness is the mother's milk of a new vitality.

As naught could divert them from themselves, they stayed together not only this day, but every other ; for they belonged to each other from the first, passing the sceptre back and forth from one to the other, playing with themselves as children play with life. Sitting in happiness and content on the golden sands, they related their past to each other, painful to him, though full of dreams ; to her a dream full of painful joys.

"I never had a mother," said Gabrielle, "but my father was as good as God to me."

"I never had a father," said the hated son, "but my mother was all of heaven to me."

Étienne told of his youth, of his love for his mother, how fond he was of flowers. At these last words Gabrielle exclaimed ; on being asked why, she blushed and was unable to answer ; then when a shadow crossed that brow, which seemed to be grazed with death's pinions, and which the soul made visible Étienne's slightest emotion, she answered :

"Because I, too, love flowers."

Was not this a maiden's confession, who believes that a community of tastes has linked them together in the far past ? Love ever tries to appear old ; this is the vanity of children.

On the morrow Étienne brought flowers, ordering his servants to find rare ones, as in the earlier days his mother had done for him. Who shall say to what depths the roots of a feeling may reach in the being of solitude who thus returns to mother love, and lavishes on a woman the same charm of caresses and lovely devotion that had beautified his life ? What grandeur there was to him in these nothings wherein were blended these two loves. Flowers and music thus became the language of their love. Gabrielle replied to Étienne's gifts with nosegays of her own, nosegays which enlightened the old leech and showed him that his ignorant daughter knew more than he could teach her.

Though absolutely free, they were captives to their own innocence, which would have been disheartening to either if they

had understood the meaning of these vague emotions. They were at once poem and poet. Music, most sensual of arts, the most absorbing of sciences, was the medium of their intercourse of ideas.

Gabrielle because she was a woman, Étienne because he had suffered and meditated much, quickly soared through the regions of vulgar passion and dwelt beyond it. Equal in their feebleness, strong in their union, if the young noble had some superior knowledge and some conventional grandeur, the daughter of the leech was more than his equal in beauty, loftiness of sentiment, and the refinement she diffused over every pleasure.

Love has its moment when it suffices to itself, when it is happy in merely being. During this springtime when everything is budding, the lover often hides from the woman he loves, in order to enjoy her more, to see her better; but Étienne and Gabrielle flung themselves into the joys of that childlike time. At times they were two sisters in their ingenuous confidences; again two brothers in their bold inquiries. Love is generally said to demand a slave and a god, but these two realized Plato's noble dream—they were but one being deified. In turns they cared for each other.

Slowly, but by-and-by, kisses came; pure, though, as the merry gambols of young animals—lively, graceful, and happy. The sentiment which led them to breathe out their souls in impassioned song invited them to love by the many aspects of the same happiness. Their delights gave them no delirium, no wakefulness at night. It was the infancy of pleasure growing and maturing within them, and unaware of the pretty red flowers which will presently crown its stem. They were familiar, never recking of danger; they cast their whole being into a word, a look, a kiss, into the long pressure of the clasping hands.

They boasted of each other's beauty, expending treasures of language on these secret idyls, inventing sweet exaggerations,

more pretty diminutives than those imagined by the ancient muse of Tibullus and echoed by the poetry of Italy.

Counting by days this period lasted for five months; did we reckon by variety of sensations, ideas, dreams, looks, of flowers blossomed, hopes fulfilled, pure delights, speeches interrupted, renewed, abandoned, frolic, laughter, bare feet dabbling in the sea, hunting for shells; her hair unfastened, elaborately combed out and refastened with flowers; kisses, surprises, embraces—call it a lifetime, death will justify the word.

Étienne had had but one sorrow in his life—the death of his mother. He was destined to know but one love—Gabrielle.

The coarse rivalry of an ambitious man hurried the destruction of this honeyed life. The Duc d'Hérerville, an old soldier in wiles and policy, heard the whispering voice of suspicion as soon as he had passed his word to the leech. The Baron d'Artagnon, lieutenant of his company of men-at-arms, had his entire confidence on all matters of policy. The baron was a man after the duke's own heart; a kind of butcher, strongly built, tall, of a manly face, stern and harsh, a brigand of the King's service, rude of manner, an iron will, supple in manœuvres, an ambitious noble withal, possessing the blunt honor of a soldier with the wiliness of a politician. His hand was such as the face demanded, large and hairy like that of a chimpanzee; his manners were brusque, his speech short and abrupt. The duke on his departure had deputed to this man the duty of watching and reporting to him the conduct of Beauvoulair toward the newly proclaimed heir presumptive.

Despite the secrecy with which Gabrielle was surrounded, it was a difficult matter to long deceive the commander of a company. He heard two voices singing; he noticed a light in the cottage by the sea. He guessed that Étienne's care for

his person, his repeated demand for flowers, must mean some woman. Again he met Gabrielle's nurse, going to or returning from Forcalier with linen for her mistress, or maybe an embroidery frame or some other article of feminine use.

The soldier made up his mind to watch the cottage, he saw the leech's daughter and fell in love with her. Now Beauvoulour, he knew, was rich. The duke would be furious at the man's audacity. On these foundations the Baron d'Artagnon based the edifice of his hopes. The duke, when he learned that his son was in love, would naturally endeavor to detach him from the girl at once; then to cure Étienne of his passion, what better means could be employed than making her faithless to Étienne by pledging her in marriage to a nobleman whose broad lands were hypothecated to a usurer. The baron himself was landless. The scheme was a grand one; it would have succeeded with many other persons; with Étienne and Gabrielle it was bound to fail. Chance, though, had served the baron a good turn.

During his stay in Paris the duke had accomplished the avenging of the death of Maximilien by killing his adversary; and he had planned an alliance with the heiress to the estates of a branch of the Grandlieu house—a tall, disdainful beauty, who was tempted, however, by the hope of one day bearing the title of Duchesse d'Hérouville. The duke expected to oblige his son to marry her. On learning from d'Artagnon that Étienne was in love with the daughter of a measly bonesetter, his determination was the more aroused on behalf of this marriage. This left the matter unquestioned.

What could such a man comprehend of love? This man who had let his own wife die beside him without ever understanding one of her heart-sighs! Perhaps never in his life had he had such a spell of violent rage as when the baron's last dispatch told him with what rapidity Beauvoulour's plan had advanced—the baron attributed all to the bonesetter's ambition. The duke ordered out his equipages and attendants,

and made his way from Paris to Rouen, bringing with him to the castle the Comtesse de Grandlieu, her sister, the Marquise de Noirmoutier, and Mlle. de Grandlieu, under the specious pretext of showing them the province of Normandy.

For some days before his arrival a rumor was spread about the country—how, no one knew—of the passion of the young Duc de Nivron for Gabrielle Beauvouloir. The good people of Rouen spoke of it to the Duc d'Hérouville at a banquet given to celebrate his return to the province; for the guests were glad of a chance to give annoyance to the old despot of Normandy. This news excited the fury of the governor to the highest pitch. He sent word to the baron to keep his return to Hérouville a close secret, giving him certain instructions to avert what he regarded as a disaster.

In the meanwhile Étienne and Gabrielle had unwound all the thread on the ball in the boundless labyrinth of love, where both, not desiring to leave it, were anxious to dwell. One day they remained from morn until eve at the window where so many events had occurred. The hours, at first filled up with sweetest talk, had closed in meditative pauses. They were, indeed, conscious of a certain craving for complete possession; they confided to each other their confused notions, reflections of a pair of beautiful, pure souls.

During these silent, serene hours, Étienne had more than once felt his eyes fill with tears as he held the hand of Gabrielle pressed to his lips. Like his mother, but happier now in his love than ever she had been, the hated son looked out upon the sea, at that time golden on the strand, black on the horizon, and hurrying hither and thither, bearing those silvery caps which foretell a storm. Gabrielle instinctively conformed to her lover's action and gazed upon the ocean, but remained silent. A single look, one of those by which two souls communicate with each other, was sufficient.

The utmost surrender would have been no sacrifice to Gabrielle nor a demand on Étienne's part. But Étienne

was in absolute ignorance of what could satisfy the craving that was agitating their souls.

When the first faint tints of twilight threw a veil over the sea, and the silence was only broken by the sighing of the waves upon the sands, Étienne stood up, Gabrielle followed his example in vague alarm, for he had released her hand. He took her in one of his arms, clasping her to him with a firm, gentle pressure of tender cohesion, and she, in sympathy with his impulse, leaned upon him with enough weight to give him the surety that she was wholly his, but yet not a burden to him. The lover rested his too-heavy head upon her white shoulders, and caressed her throat, his lips touched her throbbing bosom; Gabrielle, in her artless passion, bent her head aside so as to make more room for his, and placed her arm around his neck to support herself. Thus they remained until nightfall without the utterance of a word.

The crickets chirped in their holes, and the lovers listened to that song as though concentrating all their senses in one.

In that hour they could only be compared to an angel who, feet on earth, awaits the hour to wing his flight to heaven. They had realized the noble dream of Plato's mystic genius, the dream of all who seek a meaning in humanity; they were but one soul; they were that mysterious PEARL whose destiny it was to adorn the brow of some star as yet unknown, the hope of all!

"Will you take me home?" said Gabrielle, the first to break the exquisite silence.

"Why should we part?" replied Étienne.

"We ought always to be together," said she.

"Then stay."

"Yes."

The heavy step of old Beauvuloir now sounded in the room adjacent. The doctor had seen these two children at the window, locked in each other's arms; he now found them separated. Even the purest love demands its mystery.

"That is not right, my child," said he to Gabrielle, "to stay so late and have no lights."

"Why wrong?" said she. "You know that we love each other, and he is master of the castle."

"My children," said Beauvouloir, "if you love one another, your happiness requires that you should marry each other and pass your lives together; but your union depends on the will of my lord the duke——"

"My father gave his consent to all I might wish," cried Étienne, eagerly, and interrupting Beauvouloir.

"Then write him, monseigneur," the leech responded, "and hand the letter to me that I may send it with one that I have just written him. Bertrand is about to start now and will deliver them into monseigneur's hand. I have learned that he is now at Rouen; he is bringing hither the heiress to the house of Grandlieu, not, I imagine, solely for himself. If I were to obey my presentiments, I should take Gabrielle away this very evening."

"What! separate us?" said Étienne half-fainting, and leaning upon his love.

"Father!" was her sole response.

"Gabrielle," said the old man, handing her a phial which he reached off a table, with a gesture which told her to let Étienne inhale its contents. "Gabrielle, my scientific lore teaches me that you were intended each for the other. It was my intention to prepare my lord the duke for this marriage, which is quite contrary to his preconceived ideas, but the devil has already prejudiced him against us. This is my lord the Duc de Nivron, you, my child, are the daughter of a lowly bonesetter."

"My father made oath to oppose me in nothing," said Étienne calmly.

"Aye, he also swore to me to consent to all I might arrange in providing you with a wife," answered the leech. "But suppose he should forfeit his word?"

Étienne sat down, stunned.

"The sea was dark this evening," said he, after a silent pause.

"If you could ride, monseigneur," said Beauvoulair, "I should advise your flying with Gabrielle at once, this evening. I know you both; any other marriage would be fatal to either. The duke would certainly cast me into a dungeon, where he would leave me to end my days, when he heard of your flight, but I should joyfully die if I could by my death secure your happiness. But, alas! to mount a horse would be to risk the lives of both yourself and Gabrielle. We must face the anger of the duke here."

"Here!" echoed Étienne.

"We have been betrayed by some one in the castle, who has excited your father's resentment against us," said Beauvoulair.

"Let us throw ourselves together into the sea," whispered Étienne in Gabrielle's ear, bending over to reach the ear of the young girl, who was kneeling by his side.

She bowed her head, smiling.

Beauvoulair guessed its meaning.

"Monseigneur," said he, "your learning, added to your natural parts, has given you eloquence; and the extent of your love is irresistible. Acknowledge, then, your love to my lord your father; thus you will confirm my missive. All is not yet lost, I think. I love my daughter equally as much as you do, and I shall protect her."

Étienne shook his head.

"The sea was very dark to-night," he repeated.

"It was like a sheet of gold at our feet," said Gabrielle, melodiously.

Étienne ordered lights and sat down at table to write his father. On one side of him knelt Gabrielle, silently watching the words he wrote, but not reading them; she read all on Étienne's forehead. On the other side stood old Beauvoulair;

his jovial features were profoundly sad—sad as this gloomy chamber in which Étienne's mother had died. The doctor heard a secret voice crying to him—

“The fate of his mother awaits him!”

The letter finished, Étienne held it out to Beauvouloir, who hurriedly left to give it to Bertrand. The old servitor's horse was saddled and waiting in the courtyard; the man himself was also ready. He started and met the duke twelve miles from Hérouville.

“Come with me as far as the gate of the courtyard,” said Gabrielle to her lover when they were alone.

They went through the cardinal's library, down by the tower stairs, to the door of which Étienne had given Gabrielle the key. Upset in his mind by a sense of impending evil, the poor boy left in the tower the torch that he had brought to light his lady's footsteps, and continued with her to the cottage. A short distance from the little garden that encircled the humble habitation with flowers, the two lovers stopped. Made bold by the vague dread that oppressed them, they gave each other, in the shade of night, in the living silence, a kiss; the first kiss in which soul and sense unite and communicate a divine thrill of revealing joy.

Étienne understood the two phases of love, and Gabrielle fled, fearing she might be betrayed into something more—what? She could not say.

At the time that the Duc de Nivron was reascending the stairway in the turret, after shutting the door, a shriek of terror uttered by Gabrielle reached his ear, with the vividness of a flash of lightning scorching the eyes. Étienne ran through the rooms of the castle, down the grand staircase, and along the beach toward the cottage where he saw lights.

When Gabrielle, after leaving her lover, had entered the little garden, she saw, by the beam of a candle standing near her nurse's spinning-wheel, the figure of a man in the chair of that so excellent woman. At the sound of her steps the man

stood up and moved to meet her ; this had alarmed her and caused the cry. The aspect of the Baron d'Artagnon was indeed justification for the fear he had aroused.

"You are the daughter of Beauvoulair—my lord's leech?" asked the baron when Gabrielle had somewhat recovered from her alarm.

"Yes, monsieur."

"I have matters of the highest importance to confide to you. I am the Baron d'Artagnon, lieutenant of the company of men-at-arms commanded by Monseigneur le Duc d'Hérouville."

Under the circumstances in which she and her lover were placed, Gabrielle was struck by these words and by the apparent candor in which they were uttered.

"Your nurse is in there ; she may overhear us. Come this way," said the baron.

He went out, Gabrielle following him, until they came to the beach in the rear of the house.

"Fear nothing!" said the baron.

These simple words would have alarmed any one less ignorant than Gabrielle ; but a guileless girl who loves knows no peril.

"Dear child," said the baron, endeavoring vainly to speak in honeyed accents, "you and your father stand on the verge of a vast chasm, into which you will fall to-morrow. I cannot see your danger without giving you warning. My lord is furious with your father and yourself. He believes you have bewitched and entrapped his son ; and rather would he see him dead than see him your husband. So much for his son. As for your father, this is the determination at which my lord has arrived : Nine years ago your father was implicated in a criminal matter ; the secretion at the time of its birth of a child of noble parentage ; he was the man-midwife. My lord, knowing that your father was innocent, was the means of so influencing parliament that he obtained a guarantee against

his prosecution. Now he intends to have him arrested and given up to justice for the crime. Your father will be broken on the wheel; still, in consideration, perhaps, of past services he has rendered my lord and master, he may obtain the favor of being hanged in lieu of that. What it is that monseigneur intends doing with you I cannot say; but this I do know, that you can avert his father's anger from the Duc de Nivron, your father you can save from the horrible end that awaits him, and yourself from impending evil."

"What must I do?" asked Gabrielle.

"Throw yourself at my lord's feet, explain to him that his son loves you against your inclination, and urge that you do not love him. In proof of this, offer to marry any man he may select for your husband. He is generous; he will dower you right handsomely."

"I will do anything, but deny my love I will not," said Gabrielle.

"But if only that will save yourself, your father, and Monseigneur de Nivron?"

"Étienne," said she, "would die of it, and so should I."

"It may make Monseigneur de Nivron unhappy to part from you, but he will live for the honor of his house; you will resign yourself to be the wife of a baron only instead of being a duchess, and your father will live out his allotted days," said the practical baron.

At this moment Étienne had reached the house. Not seeing Gabrielle, he gave utterance to a piercing cry.

"Here he is!" cried the young girl; "let me go and comfort him."

"To-morrow I shall come for your answer," said the baron.

"I will consult my father," she made answer.

"You will see him no more. I have received orders to seize him and send him in chains to Rouen, under an armed escort," said d'Artagnon, leaving poor Gabrielle stricken with terror.

She rushed into the cottage and found Étienne horrified at the silence of the nurse in answer to his question: "Where is she?"

"I am here," cried the girl, whose voice was ice, her step lead, her color death.

"What has occurred?" he asked; "I heard your cry!"

"Yes, I hurt my foot against——"

"No, my beloved," said Étienne, interrupting her, "I heard the steps of a man."

"Étienne, in some way, we must have offended God. Let us kneel down and pray. Afterward I will tell you all."

Étienne and Gabrielle knelt at the prie-Dieu, and the nurse recited her rosary.

"O God," implored the girl, in a fervor of spirit which carried her beyond terrestrial space, "if we have not sinned against Thy holy laws, if we have not offended against the church or the King, we, who are but one, in whom love shines with the light Thou has set in the pearl of the ocean, be merciful to us; let it be that we are not divided from each other either in this world or that which is to come."

"And thou, O my mother! who art in bliss, beseech the Holy Virgin that if Gabrielle and I may not be happy together here below, we may at least die together, and that without suffering. Call us and we will go to thee."

Then, after reciting their usual evening prayers, Gabrielle related her interview with the Baron d'Artagnon.

"Gabrielle," said the youth, gathering boldness from the despair of love, "I shall know how to resist my father."

He kissed her on the forehead, but not again on the lips. Then he returned to the castle, resolved to face the terrible man who had so crushed his whole life. He knew not that Gabrielle's house was surrounded by men-at-arms as soon as he had quit it.

The next day he was stricken with grief, when, on going to see her, he found Gabrielle a prisoner. But she sent her nurse

to him with a message saying that she would rather die than be false to him; moreover, that she knew a way by which to elude the vigilance of the guards, and that shortly she would hide herself in the cardinal's library, where no one was likely to suspect her presence, though, as yet, she did not know at what time she would be able to accomplish this. So Étienne returned to his room, where he spent his time in agonizing expectancy.

At three o'clock the duke and his suite arrived at the castle, where he expected his guests to supper. At dusk Madame la Comtesse de Grandlieu, leaning on the arm of her daughter, and the duke, with the Marquise de Noirmoutier, came up the grand stairway in solemn silence, for their master's foreboding looks had terrified his retainers.

Though Baron d'Artagnon had been told of Gabrielle's escape from his guards, he assured the duke that she was a prisoner, for he was troubled lest his own scheme should fail if the duke should be angered at her flight.

These two terrible faces—his and the duke's—wore an expression of ill-disguised ferocity, simulated by an air of gallantry assumed for the occasion. The duke had sent for his son, commanding his presence in the salon. When the company entered it, d'Artagnon saw in Étienne's dejected look that he was not aware of Gabrielle's escape.

"This is my son," said the old duke, taking Étienne by the hand and presenting him to the ladies.

Étienne bowed without speaking a word. The countess and Mlle. de Grandlieu exchanged glances which were noted by the duke.

"Your daughter will be ill-matched—is that your thought?" said he in a low voice.

"Just the contrary, my dear duke," replied the mother, smiling.

The Marquise de Noirmoutier, who accompanied her sister, gave a significant little laugh. That laugh was a thrust in

Étienne's heart, terrified as he already was at the sight of the tall demoiselle.

"Well, Monseigneur le Duc," said the duke in a low voice and with a jovial chuckle, "have I not found you a handsome wife? What say you to that beautiful, tall slip of a girl, my cherub?"

The old duke never once had a doubt of his son's obedience; Étienne was to him the son of his mother, made of the same dough, docile to his kneading.

"Only let him beget a child, then he may die; it's but little I should care," thought the old man.

"Father," said the young man, in a mild voice, "I do not understand you."

"Come into your own room; I wish to say a few words to you," replied the duke, leading the way into the state bed-chamber.

Étienne followed his father. The three ladies, moved by curiosity, shared by the Baron d'Artagnon, roved around the grand salon in such manner as finally to group themselves at the door of the chamber, which had been partly left open by the duke.

"My pretty Benjamin," said the duke, softening his voice, "I have selected that tall and handsome young lady to be your wife. She is heiress to the estates of the younger branch of the house of Grandlieu, an old and noble family of Brittany. So, now, make yourself a gallant youth, recall all the tender love-making you have read in your books, and make some right pretty speeches."

"Father, is it not the first duty of a great gentleman that he should keep his word?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, on that day when I forgave you the death of my mother, dying here, as she did, because married to you, did you not promise never to thwart my wishes? 'I myself will obey you as the family god,' was the substance of your

words. Now I do not demand aught of you, I only claim my freedom to act in a matter which concerns myself alone—my marriage.”

“But as I understood,” said the old duke, all the blood of his body rushing into his face, “you pledged yourself to the propagation of our noble race.”

“You made no conditions,” said Étienne. “What love has to do with the propagation of race I do not know. But this I do know, that I love the daughter of your old friend Beauvouloir, the granddaughter of your old love, La Belle Romaine.”

“But she is dead,” replied the old colossus, with a savage, mocking air of solemnity, too plainly showing his intention to make away with her.

There was a moment of utter silence.

The duke saw through the open door the three ladies and d’Artagnon. At this crucial moment, Étienne, who had an acute sense of hearing, caught the sound from the library of poor Gabrielle’s voice, who was singing to let her lover know she was there.

“Une Hermine
Est moins fine;
Le lys a moins de blancheur.”

This ravishing sound recalled to life the hated son who had been flung into the gulf of death by his father’s horrible speech.

Though that one spasm of anguish, albeit speedily relieved, had struck him to the heart, he collected all his strength, looked his father in the face for the first time in his life, giving scorn for scorn, and said, in deep hatred:

“A nobleman ought not to lie!” Then with one bound he reached the door of the library and called:

“Gabrielle!”

Suddenly the gentle creature appeared in the dusk, like a

lily among its leaves, trembling before these mocking women thus informed of Étienne's love.

As the clouds that bear the thunder project upon the heavens, so the old duke had reached a climax of fury that is indescribable; his dark figure stood out against the background of the ladies' brilliant dresses. Between the destruction of his son, a *mésalliance*, and the extinction of his race, most fathers would have hesitated, but in this indomitable old man there was the ferocious vein which had hitherto proved a match for every earthly difficulty; on each occasion he drew his sword, as the only instrument with which to cut any Gordian knot that might encumber his path. Under present circumstances, when the convulsion of ideas had burst all bounds, the nature of the man was bound to triumph.

Twice detected in flagrant lies by a creature he abhorred, the child cursed by him a thousand times, and never more vehemently than at this present, when that son's despised and, to his father, the most despicable kind of weakness had triumphed over a force he had hitherto deemed omnipotent, no longer was the duke a father, the man no longer existed, it was a tiger that issued from the lair. The old man, made young by fierce revenge, blasted the sweetest pair of angels that had ever planted feet on earth, with a look surcharged with a death-dealing hatred.

"Die, then, both of you!" he cried. "You, vile abortion, the proof of my shame—and you," he said to Gabrielle, "miserable strumpet with the viper's tongue that has poisoned my race."

These words were a cutting blow to the hearts of the two children, showing the awful terror that they purposed.

When Etienne saw his father lift his huge hand, raising his sword above Gabrielle, he dropped dead; and Gabrielle, in trying to support him, fell dead by his side.

The duke in his fury slammed the door upon their corpses, and said to Mademoiselle de Grandlieu:

“I will marry you myself!”

“And you are hale and hearty enough to beget a new lineage,” whispered the countess in the ear of the old duke, who had served under seven Kings of France.

PARIS, 1831-1836.



A SECOND HOME

(*Une Double Famille*).

TRANSLATED BY CLARA BELL.

*To Madame la Comtesse Louise de Turheim as a token
of remembrance and affectionate respect.*

THE Rue du Tourniquet-Saint-Jean, formerly one of the darkest and most tortuous of the streets about the Hôtel de Ville, zigzagged round the little gardens of the Paris prefecture, and ended at the Rue Martroi, exactly at the angle of an old wall now pulled down. Here stood the turnstile to which the street owed its name ; it was not removed till 1823, when the municipality built a ballroom on the garden plot adjoining the Hôtel de Ville, for the fête given in honor of the Duc d'Angoulême on his return from Spain.

The widest part of the Rue du Tourniquet was the end opening into the Rue de la Tixeranderie, and even there it was less than six feet across. Hence in rainy weather the gutter water was soon deep at the foot of the old houses, sweeping down with it the dust and refuse deposited at the corner-stones by the residents. As the dust-carts could not pass through, the inhabitants trusted to storms to wash their always miry alley ; for how could it be clean ?

The residents, who lighted their lamps at five o'clock in the month of June, in winter never put them out. To this day the enterprising wayfarer who should approach the Marais along the quays, past the end of the Rue du Chaume, the Rues de l'Homme Armé, des Billettes, and des Deux-Portes, all leading to the Rue du Tourniquet, might think he had passed through cellars all the way.

Almost all the streets of old Paris, of which ancient chroni-

cles laud the magnificence, were like this damp and gloomy labyrinth, where antiquaries still find historical curiosities to admire. For instance, on the house then forming the corner where the Rue du Tourniquet joined the Rue de la Tixeranderie, the clamps might still be seen of two strong iron rings fixed to the wall, the relics of the chains put up every night by the watch to secure public safety.

This house, remarkable for its antiquity, had been constructed in a way that bore witness to the unhealthiness of these old dwellings; for, to preserve the first floor from damp, the arches of the cellars rose about two feet above the soil, and the house was entered up three outside steps. The door was crowned by a closed arch, of which the keystone bore a female head and some time-eaten arabesques. Three windows, their sills about five feet from the ground, belonged to a small set of rooms looking out on the Rue du Tourniquet, whence they derived their light. These windows were protected by strong iron bars, very wide apart, and ending below in an outward curve like the bars of a baker's window.

If any passer-by during the day were curious enough to peep into the two rooms forming this little dwelling, he could see nothing; for only under the sun of July could he discern, in the second room, two beds hung with green serge, placed side by side under the paneling of an old-fashioned alcove; but in the afternoon, by about three o'clock, when the candles were lighted, through the panes of the first room an old woman might be seen sitting on a stool by the fireplace, where she nursed the fire in a brasier, to simmer a stew, such as porters' wives are expert in. A few kitchen utensils, hung up against the wall, were visible in the twilight.

At that hour an old table on trestles, but bare of linen, was laid with pewter spoons, and the dish concocted by the old woman. Three wretched chairs were all the furniture of this room, which was at once the kitchen and the dining-room. Over the mantel were a piece of looking-glass, a tinder-box,

three glasses, some matches, and a large, cracked, white jug. Still, the floor, the utensils, the fireplace, all gave a pleasant sense of the perfect cleanliness and thrift that pervaded the dull and gloomy home.

The old woman's pale, withered face was quite in harmony with the darkness of the street and the mustiness of the place. As she sat there, motionless, in her chair, it might have been thought that she was as inseparable from the house as a snail from its brown shell; her face, alert with a vague expression of mischief, was framed in a flat cap made of net, which barely covered her white hair; her fine, gray eyes were as quiet as the street, and the many wrinkles in her face might be compared to the cracks in the walls.

From sunrise till dark, excepting when she was getting a meal ready, or, with a basket on her arm, was out purchasing provisions, the old woman sat in the adjoining room by the farther window, opposite a young girl. At any hour of the day the passer-by could see the needlewoman seated in an old, red velvet chair, bending over an embroidery frame, and stitching indefatigably.

Her mother had a green pillow on her knee, and busied herself with hand-made net; but her fingers could move the bobbins but slowly; her sight was feeble, for on her nose there rested a pair of those antiquated spectacles which keep their place on the nostrils by the grip of a spring. By night these two hard-working women set a lamp between them; and the light, concentrated by two globe-shaped bottles of water, showed the elder the fine network made by the threads on her pillow, and the younger the most delicate details of the pattern she was embroidering. The outward bend of the window-bars had allowed the girl to rest a box of earth on the window-sill, in which grew some sweet peas, nasturtiums, a sickly little honeysuckle, and some morning-glories that twined their frail stems up the iron bars. These etiolated plants produced a few pale flowers, and added a touch of indescribable sadness

and sweetness to the picture offered by this window, in which the two figures were appropriately framed.

The most selfish soul who chanced to see this domestic scene would carry away with him a perfect image of the life led in Paris by the working-class of women, for the embroideress evidently lived by her needle. Many, as they passed through the turnstile, found themselves wondering how a girl could preserve her color, living in such a cellar. A student of lively imagination, going that way to cross to the Quartier-Latin, would compare this obscure and vegetative life to that of the ivy that clung to these chill walls, to that of the peasants born to labor, who are born, toil, and die unknown to the world they have helped to feed. A house-owner, after studying the house with the eye of a valuer, would have said: "What will become of those two women if embroidery should go out of fashion?" Among the men who, having some appointment at the Hôtel de Ville or the Palais de Justice, were obliged to go through this street at fixed hours, either on their way to business or on their return home, there may have been some charitable soul. Some widower or Adonis of forty, brought so often into the secrets of these sad lives, may perhaps have reckoned on the poverty of this mother and daughter, and have hoped to become the master at no great cost of the innocent workwoman, whose nimble and dimpled fingers, youthful figure, and white skin—a charm due, no doubt, to living in this sunless street—had excited his admiration. Perhaps, again, some honest clerk, with twelve hundred francs a year, seeing every day the diligence the girl gave to her needle, and appreciating the purity of her life, was only waiting for improved prospects to unite one humble life with another, one form of toil to another, and to bring at any rate a man's arm and a calm affection, pale-hued like the flowers in the window, to uphold this home.

Vague hope certainly gave life to the mother's dim, gray eyes. Every morning, after the most frugal breakfast, she

took up her pillow, though chiefly for the look of the thing, for she would lay her spectacles on a little mahogany work-table as old as herself, and look out of window from about half-past eight till ten at the regular passers in the street ; she caught their glances, remarked on their gait, their dress, their countenance, and almost seemed to be offering her daughter, her gossiping eyes so evidently tried to attract some magnetic sympathy by manœuvres worthy of the stage.

The daughter rarely looked up. Modesty, or a painful consciousness of poverty, seemed to keep her eyes riveted to the work-frame ; and only some exclamation of surprise from her mother moved her to show her small features. Then a clerk in a new coat, or who unexpectedly appeared with a woman on his arm, might catch sight of the girl's slightly up-turned nose, her rosy mouth, and gray eyes, always bright and lively in spite of her fatiguing toil. Her late hours had left no trace on her face but a pale circle marked under each eye on the fresh rosiness of her cheeks. The poor child looked as if created for love and cheerfulness.

The girl's hair was always carefully dressed. After the manner of Paris needlewomen, her toilet seemed to her quite complete when she had brushed her hair smooth and tucked up the little short curls that played on each temple in contrast with the whiteness of her skin. The growth of it on the back of her neck was so pretty, and the brown line, so clearly traced, gave such a pleasing idea of her youth and charm, that the observer, seeing her bent over her work, and unmoved by any sound, was inclined to think of her as a coquette. Such inviting promise had excited the interest of more than one young man, who turned round in the vain hope of seeing that modest countenance.

"Caroline, there is a new face that passes regularly by, and not one of the old ones is to compare with it."

These words, spoken in a low voice by her mother one August morning in 1815, had vanquished the young needle-

woman's indifference, and she looked out on the street ; but in vain, the stranger was gone.

" Whence has he flown ? " said she.

" He will come back no doubt at four ; I shall see him coming, and will touch your foot with mine. I am sure he will come back ; he has been through the street regularly for the last three days ; but his hours vary. The first day he came by at six o'clock, the day before yesterday it was four, yesterday as early as three. I remember seeing him occasionally some time ago. He is some clerk in the prefect's office who has moved to the Marais. Why ! " she exclaimed, after glancing down the street, " our gentleman of the brown coat has taken to wearing a wig ; how much it alters him ! "

The gentleman of the brown coat was, it would seem, the individual who commonly closed the daily procession, for the old woman put on her spectacles and took up her work with a sigh, glancing at her daughter with so strange a look that M. Lavater himself would have found it more than difficult to interpret.

At about four in the afternoon the old lady pushed her foot against Caroline's, and the girl looked up quickly enough to see the new actor, whose regular advent would thenceforth lend variety to the scene. He was tall and thin, and wore black, a man of about forty, with a certain solemnity of demeanor ; as his piercing hazel eye met the old woman's dull gaze, he made her quake, for she felt as though he had the gift of reading hearts, or much practice in it, and his presence must surely be as icy as the air of this dank street. Caroline, next day, discerned the lines of long mental suffering on that brow that was so prompt to frown. The rather hollow cheeks of the unknown bore the stamp of the seal which sorrow sets on its victims as if to grant them the consolation of common recognition and brotherly union for resistance. Though the girl's expression was at first one of lively but innocent curiosity, it assumed a look of gentle sympathy

as the stranger receded from view, like the last relation following in a funeral train.

The heat of the weather was so great, and the gentleman was so absent-minded, that he had taken off his hat and forgotten to put it on again as he went down the squalid street. Caroline could see the stern look given to his countenance by the way the hair was brushed up from his forehead. The strong impression, devoid of charm, made on the girl by this man's appearance was totally unlike any sensation produced by the other passengers who used the street; for the first time in her life she was moved to pity for some one else than herself and her mother. She looked forward to the morrow to form a definite opinion of him.

It was the first time, indeed, that a man passing down the street had ever given rise to much thought in her mind. She generally had nothing but a smile in response to her mother's hypotheses, for the old woman looked on every passer-by as a possible protector for her daughter. And if such suggestions, so crudely presented, gave rise to no evil thoughts in Caroline's mind, her indifference must be ascribed to the persistent and unfortunately inevitable toil in which the energies of her sweet youth were being spent, and which would infallibly mar the clearness of her eyes or steal from her fresh cheeks the bloom that still colored them.

For two months or more the "Black Gentleman"—the name they had given him—was erratic in his movements; he did not always come down the Rue du Tourniquet; the old woman sometimes saw him in the evening when he had not passed in the morning, and he did not come by at such regular hours as the clerks who served Madame Crochard instead of a clock; moreover, excepting on the first occasion, when his look had given the old mother a sense of alarm, his eyes had never once dwelt on the weird picture of these two female gnomes. With the exception of two carriage-gates and a dark hardware store, there were in the Rue du Tourniquet only

barred windows, giving light to the staircases of the neighboring houses ; thus the stranger's lack of curiosity was not to be accounted for by the presence of dangerous rivals ; and Madame Crochard was greatly piqued to see her " Black Gentlemen " always lost in thought, his eyes fixed on the ground, or straight before him, as though he hoped to read the future in the fog of the Rue du Tourniquet. However, one morning, about the middle of September, Caroline Crochard's roguish face stood out so brightly against the dark background of the room, looking so fresh among the belated flowers and faded leaves that twined round the window-bars, the daily scene was gay with such contrasts of light and shade, of pink and white blending with the light material on which the pretty needlewoman was working, and with the red and brown hues of the chairs, that the stranger gazed very attentively at the effects of this living picture.

The stranger merely exchanged glances with Caroline, swift indeed, but enough to effect a certain contact between their souls, and both were aware that they would think of each other. When the stranger came by again, at four in the afternoon, Caroline recognized the sound of his step on the echoing pavement ; they looked steadily at each other, and with evident purpose ; his eyes had an expression of kindness which made him smile, and Caroline colored ; the old mother noted them both with satisfaction. Ever after that memorable afternoon, the Gentleman in Black went by twice a day, with rare exceptions, which both the women observed.

All through the three first winter months, twice a day, Caroline and the stranger thus saw each other for so long as it took him to traverse the piece of road that lay along the length of the door and three windows of the house. Caroline and the stranger seemed to understand each other from the first ; and then, by dint of scrutinizing each other's faces, they learned to know them well. Ere long it came to be, as it were, a visit that the unknown owed to Caroline ; if by any

chance her Gentleman in Black went by without bestowing on her the half-smile of his expressive lips, or the cordial glance of his brown eyes, something was missing to her all day. She felt as an old man does to whom the daily study of a newspaper is such an indispensable pleasure that on the day after any great holiday he wanders about quite lost, and seeking, as much out of vagueness as for want of patience, the sheet by which he cheats an hour of life.

“He must have had some trouble yesterday,” was the thought that constantly arose in the embroideress’ mind as she saw some change in the features of the Black Gentleman.

“Oh, he has been working too hard !” was a reflection due to another shade of expression which Caroline could discern.

The stranger, on his part, could guess when the girl had spent Sunday in finishing a dress, and he felt an interest in the pattern. As quarter-day came near he could see that her pretty face was clouded by anxiety, and he could guess when Caroline had sat up late at work ; but, above all, he noted how the gloomy thoughts that dimmed the cheerful and delicate features of her young face gradually vanished by degrees as their acquaintance ripened. When winter had killed the climbers and plants of her window garden, and the window was kept closed, it was not without a smile of gentle amusement that the stranger observed the concentration of the light within, just at the level of Caroline’s head. The very small fire and the frosty red of the two women’s faces betrayed the poverty of their home ; but if ever his own countenance expressed regretful compassion, the girl proudly met it with assumed cheerfulness.

Meanwhile the feelings that had arisen in their hearts remained buried there, no incident occurring to reveal to either of them how deep and strong they were in the other ; they had never even heard the sound of each other’s voice. Each seemed to fear lest it should bring on the other some grief

more serious than those they felt tempted to share. Was it shyness or friendship that checked them? Was it a dread of meeting with selfishness, or the odious distrust which sunders all the residents within the walls of a populous city? Did the voice of conscience warn them of approaching danger. It would be impossible to explain the instinct which made them as much enemies as friends, at once indifferent and attached, drawn to each other by impulse, and severed by circumstance. Each perhaps hoped to preserve a cherished illusion. It might almost have been thought that the stranger feared lest he should hear some vulgar word from those lips as fresh and pure as a flower, and that Caroline felt herself unworthy of the mysterious personage who was evidently possessed of power and wealth.

As to Madame Crochard, that tender mother, almost angry at her daughter's persistent lack of decisiveness, now showed a sulky face to the Black Gentleman, on whom she had hitherto smiled with a sort of benevolent servility. Never before had she complained so bitterly of being compelled, at her age, to do the cooking; never had her catarrh and her rheumatism wrung so many groans from her; finally, she could not, this winter, promise so many ells of net as Caroline had hitherto been able to count on.

Under these circumstances, and toward the end of December, at the time when bread was dearest, and that dearth of grain was beginning to be felt which made the year 1816 so hard on the poor, the stranger observed on the features of the girl, whose name was still unknown to him, the painful traces of a secret sorrow which his kindest smiles could not dispel. Before long he saw in Caroline's eyes the dimness attributable to long hours at night. One night, toward the end of the month, the Gentleman in Black passed down the Rue du Tourniquet at the quite unwonted hour of one in the morning. The perfect silence allowed of his hearing before passing the house the lachrymose voice of the old mother, and Caroline's

even sadder tones, mingling with the swish of a shower of sleet. He crept along as slowly as he could; and then, at the risk of being taken up by the police, he stood still below the window to hear the mother and daughter, while watching them through the largest of the holes in the yellow muslin curtains, which were eaten away by wear as a cabbage leaf is riddled by caterpillars. The inquisitive stranger saw a sheet of paper on the table that stood between the two work-frames, and on which stood the lamp and the globes filled with water. He at once identified it as a writ. Madame Crochard was weeping, and Caroline's voice was thick, and had lost its sweet, caressing tone.

"Why be so heart-broken, mother? Monsieur Molineux will not sell us up or turn us out before I have finished this dress; only two nights more and I shall take it home to Madame Roguin."

"And supposing she keeps you waiting as usual? And will the money for the gown pay the baker too?"

The spectator of this scene had long practice in reading faces; he fancied he could discern that the mother's grief was as false as the daughter's was genuine; he turned away, and presently came back. When he next peeped through the hole in the curtain, Madame Crochard was in bed. The young needlewoman, bending over her frame, was embroidering with indefatigable diligence; on the table, with the writ, lay a triangular hunch of bread, placed there, no doubt, to sustain her in the night and to remind her of the reward of her industry. The stranger was tremulous with pity and sympathy; he threw his purse in through a cracked pane so that it should fall at the girl's feet; and then, without waiting to enjoy her surprise, he escaped, his cheeks tingling.

Next morning the shy and melancholy stranger went past with a look of deep preoccupation, but he could not escape Caroline's gratitude; she had opened her window and affected to be digging in the square window-box buried in snow, a

pretext of which the clumsy ingenuity plainly told her benefactor that she had been resolved not to see him only through the pane. Her eyes were full of tears as she bowed her head, as much as to say to her benefactor: "I can only repay you from my heart."

But the Gentleman in Black affected not to understand the meaning of this sincere gratitude. In the evening, as he came by, Caroline was busy mending the window with a sheet of paper, and she smiled at him, showing her row of pearly teeth like a promise. Thenceforth the Stranger went another way, and was no more seen in the Rue du Tourniquet.

It was one day early in the following May that, as Caroline was giving the roots of a honeysuckle a glass of water, one Saturday morning, she caught sight of a narrow strip of cloudless blue between the black lines of houses, and said to her mother—

"Mamma, we must go to-morrow for a trip to Montmorency!"

She had scarcely uttered the words, in a tone of glee, when the Gentleman in Black came by, sadder and more dejected than ever. Caroline's innocent and ingratiating glance might have been taken for an invitation. And, in fact, on the following day, when Madame Crochard, dressed in a pelisse of claret-colored merino, a silk bonnet, and striped shawl of an imitation Indian pattern, came out to choose seats in a chaise at the corner of the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis and the Rue d'Enghien, there she found her unknown standing like a man waiting for his wife. A smile of pleasure lighted up the stranger's face when his eye fell on Caroline, her neat feet shod in plum-colored prunella gaiters, and her white dress tossed by a breeze that would have been fatal to an ill-made woman, but which displayed her graceful form. Enjoyment seemed to have made Caroline as light as the straw of her hat; but when she saw the Gentleman in Black, radiant hope

suddenly eclipsed her bright dress and her beauty. The Stranger, who appeared to be in doubt, had not perhaps made up his mind to be the girl's escort for the day till this revelation of the delight she felt on seeing him. He at once hired a vehicle with a fairly good horse, to drive to Saint-Leu-Taverny, and he offered Madame Crochard and her daughter seats by his side. The mother accepted without ado; but presently, when they were already on the way to Saint-Denis, she was by way of having scruples, and made a few civil speeches as to the possible inconvenience two women might cause their companion.

"Perhaps, monsieur, you wished to drive alone to Saint-Leu-Taverny," said she, with affected simplicity.

Before long she complained of the heat, and especially of her cough, which, she said, had hindered her from closing her eyes all night; and by the time the carriage had reached Saint-Denis, Madame Crochard seemed to be fast asleep. Her snores, indeed, seemed to the Gentleman in Black rather doubtfully genuine, and he frowned as he looked at the old woman with a very suspicious eye.

"Oh, she is fast asleep," said Caroline guilelessly; "she never ceased coughing all night. She must be very tired."

Her companion made no reply, but he looked at the girl with a smile that seemed to say—

"Poor child, you little know your mother!"

However, in spite of his distrust, as the chaise made its way down the long avenue of poplars leading to Eaubonne, the stranger thought that Madame Crochard was really asleep; perhaps he did not care to inquire how far her slumbers were genuine or feigned. Whether it were that the brilliant sky, the pure country air, and the heady fragrance of the first green shoots of the poplars, the catkins of willows, and the flowers of the blackthorn had inclined his heart to open like all the nature around him; or that any longer restraint was too oppressive while Caroline's sparkling eyes responded to

his own, the Gentleman in Black entered on a conversation with his young companion, as aimless as the swaying of the branches in the wind, as devious as the flitting of the butterflies in the azure air, as illogical as the melodious murmur of the fields, and, like it, full of mysterious love. At that season is not the rural country as tremulous as a bride that has donned her marriage robe ; does it not invite the coldest soul to be happy ? What heart could remain unfrozen, and what lips could keep its secret, on leaving the gloomy streets of the Marais for the first time since the previous autumn, and entering the smiling and picturesque valley of Montmorency ; on seeing it in the morning light, its endless horizons receding from view ; and then lifting a charmed gaze to eyes which expressed no less infinitude mingled with love ?

The Stranger discovered that Caroline was sprightly rather than witty ; affectionate, but ill educated ; and while her laugh was giddy, her words promised genuine feeling. When, in response to her companion's shrewd questioning, the girl spoke with the heartfelt effusiveness of which the lower classes are lavish, not guarding it with reticence like people of the world, the Black Gentleman's face brightened and seemed to renew its youth. His countenance by degrees lost the sadness that lent sternness to his features, and little by little they gained a look of handsome youthfulness which made Caroline proud and happy. The pretty needlewoman guessed that her new friend had been long weaned from tenderness and love, and no longer believed in the devotion of woman.

Their conversation had insensibly become so intimate that, by the time when the carriage stopped at the first houses of the straggling village of Saint-Leu, Caroline was calling the gentleman Monsieur Roger. Then for the first time the old mother awoke.

" Caroline, she has heard everything ! " said Roger suspiciously in the girl's ear.

Caroline's reply was an exquisite smile of disbelief, which

dissipated the dark cloud that his fear of some plot on the old woman's part had brought to this suspicious mortal's brow. Madame Crochard was amazed at nothing, approved of everything, followed her daughter and Monsieur Roger into the park, where the two young people had agreed to wander through the smiling meadows and fragrant copses made famous by the taste of Queen Hortense.

"Good heavens! how lovely!" exclaimed Caroline when, standing on the green ridge where the forest of Montmorency begins, she saw lying at her feet the wide valley with its combes sheltering scattered villages, its horizon of blue hills, its church-towers, its meadows and fields, whence a murmur came up, to die on her ear like the swell of the ocean. The three wanderers made their way by the bank of an artificial stream and came to the Swiss valley, where stands a *châlet* that had more than once given shelter to Hortense and Napoleon. When Caroline had seated herself with pious reverence on the mossy wooden bench where kings and princesses and the Emperor had rested, Madame Crochard expressed a wish to have a nearer view of a bridge that hung across between two rocks at some little distance, and bent her steps toward that rural curiosity, leaving her daughter in Monsieur Roger's care, though telling them that she would not go out of sight.

"What, poor child!" cried Roger, "have you never longed for wealth and the pleasures of luxury? Have you never wished that you might wear the beautiful dresses you embroider?"

"It would not be the truth, Monsieur Roger, if I were to tell you that I never think how happy people must be who are rich. Oh, yes! I often fancy, especially when I am going to sleep, how glad I should be to see my poor mother no longer compelled to go out, whatever the weather, to buy our little provisions, at her age. I should like her to have a servant who, every morning before she was up, would bring her up her coffee, nicely sweetened with white sugar. And

she loves reading novels, poor dear soul ! Well, and I would rather see her wearing out her eyes over her favorite books than over twisting her bobbins from morning till night. And, again, she ought to have a little good wine. In short, I should like to see her comfortable—she is so good.”

“Then she has shown you great kindness?”

“Oh, yes,” said the girl, in a tone of conviction. Then, after a short pause, during which the two young people stood watching Madame Crochard, who had got to the middle of the rustic bridge, and was shaking her finger at them, Caroline went on—

“Oh, yes, she has been so good to me. What care she took of me when I was little ! She sold her last silver forks to apprentice me to the old maid who taught me to embroider. And my poor father ! What did she not go through to make him end his days in happiness !” The girl shivered at the remembrance, and hid her face in her hands. “Well, come, let us forget past sorrows !” she added, trying to rally her high spirits. She blushed as she saw that Roger too was moved, but she dared not look at him.

“What was your father ?” he asked.

“He was an opera-dancer, before the Revolution,” said she, with an air of perfect simplicity, “and my mother sang in the chorus. My father, who was leader of the figures on the stage, happened to be present at the siege of the Bastille. He was recognized by some of the assailants, who asked him whether he could not lead a real attack, since he was used to leading such enterprises on the boards. My father was brave ; he accepted the post, led the insurgents, and was rewarded by the nomination to the rank of captain in the army of Sambre-et-Meuse, where he distinguished himself so far as to rise rapidly to be a colonel. But at Lutzen he was so badly wounded that, after a year’s sufferings, he died in Paris. The Bourbons returned ; my mother could obtain no pension, and we fell into such abject misery that we were compelled to

work for our living. For some time past she has been ailing, poor dear, and I have never known her so little resigned; she complains a good deal, and, indeed, I cannot wonder, for she has known the pleasures of an easy life. For my part, as I cannot pine for delights I have never known, I have but one thing to wish for."

"And that is?" said Roger eagerly, as if roused from a dream.

"That women may long continue to wear embroidered net dresses, so that I may never lack work."

The frankness of this confession interested the young man, who looked with less hostile eyes on Madame Crochard as she slowly made her way back to them.

"Well, children, have you had a long talk?" said she, with a half-laughing, half-indulgent air. "When I think, Monsieur Roger, that the 'Little Corporal' has sat where you are sitting," she went on after a pause. "Poor man! how my husband worshiped him! Ah! Crochard did well to die, for he could not have borne to think of him where *they* have sent him!"

Roger put his finger to his lips, and the good woman went on very gravely, with a shake of her head—

"All right, mouth shut and tongue still! But," added she, unhooking a bit of her bodice, and showing a ribbon and cross tied round her neck by a piece of black ribbon, "they shall never hinder me from wearing what *he* gave to my poor Crochard, and I will have it buried with me."

On hearing this speech, which at that time was regarded as seditious, Roger interrupted the old lady by rising suddenly, and they returned to the village through the park walks. The young man left them for a few minutes while he went to order a meal at the best eating-house in Taverny.

The dinner was cheerful. Roger was no longer the melancholy shade that was wont to pass along the Rue du Tour-niquet; he was not the Black Gentleman, but rather a confid-

ing young man ready to take life as it came, like the two hard-working women who, on the morrow, might lack bread ; he seemed alive to all the joys of youth, his smile was quite affectionate and childlike.

When, at five o'clock, this happy meal was ended with a few glasses of champagne, Roger was the first to propose that they should join the village ball under the chestnuts, where he and Caroline danced together. Their hands met with sympathetic pressure, their hearts beat with the same hopes, and, under the blue sky and the slanting, rosy beams of sunset, their eyes sparkled with fires which, to them, made the glory of the heavens pale. How strange is the power of an idea, of a desire !

“So the day is already at an end !” On hearing this exclamation from her unknown friend when the dance was over, Caroline looked at him compassionately, as his face assumed once more a faint shade of sadness.

“Why should you not be as happy in Paris as you are here ?” she asked. “Is happiness to be found only at Saint-Leu ? It seems to me that I can henceforth never be unhappy anywhere.”

Roger was struck by these words, spoken with the glad unrestraint that always carries a woman further than she intended, just as prudery often lends her greater cruelty than she feels. For the first time since that glance, which had, in a way, been the beginning of their friendship, Caroline and Roger had the same idea ; though they did not express it, they felt it at the same instant, as a result of a common impression like that of a comforting fire cheering both under the frost of winter ; then, as if frightened by each other's silence, they made their way to the spot where the carriage was waiting. But before getting into it they playfully took hands and ran on together down the dark avenue in front of Madame Crochard. When they could no longer see the white net cap, which showed as a speck through the leaves where the old

woman was—"Caroline!" said Roger in a tremulous voice and with a beating heart.

The girl was startled and drew back a few steps, understanding the invitation this question conveyed; however, she held out her hand, which was passionately kissed, but which she hastily withdrew, for by standing on tiptoe she could see her mother.

Madame Crochard affected blindness, as if, with a reminiscence of her old parts, she was only required to figure as a supernumerary.

The adventures of these two young people were not continued in the Rue du Tourniquet. To see Roger and Caroline once more, we must leap into the heart of modern Paris, where, in some of the newly built houses, there are apartments that seem made on purpose for newly married couples to spend their honeymoon in. There the paper and paint are as fresh as the bride and bridegroom, and the decorations are in blossom like their love; everything is in harmony with youthful notions and ardent wishes.

Half-way down the Rue Taitbout, in a house whose stone walls were still white, where the columns of the hall and the doorway were as yet spotless, and the inner walls shone with the neat painting which our recent intimacy with English ways had brought into fashion, there was, on the third floor, a small suite of rooms fitted by the architect as though he had known what their use would be. A simple, airy anteroom, with a stucco dado, formed an entrance into a drawing-room and dining-room. Out of the drawing-room opened a pretty bedroom, with a bath-room beyond. Every chimney-shelf had over it a fine mirror elegantly framed. The doors were crowned with arabesques in good taste, and the cornices were in the best style.

For above a month Caroline had been at home in this apartment, furnished by an upholsterer who submitted to an artist's

guidance. A short description of the principal room will suffice to give an idea of the wonders it offered to Caroline's delighted eyes when Roger installed her there. Hangings of gray stuff trimmed with green silk adorned the walls of her bedroom; the seats, covered with light-colored woolen sateen, were of easy and comfortable shapes, and in the latest fashion; a chest of drawers of some simple wood, inlaid with lines of a darker hue, contained the treasures of the toilet; a writing-table to match served for inditing love-letters on scented paper; the bed, with antique draperies, could not fail to suggest thoughts of love by its soft hangings of elegant lawn; the window-curtains, of drab silk with green fringe, were always half drawn to subdue the light; a bronze clock represented Love crowning Psyche; and a carpet of Gothic design on a red ground set off the other accessories of this delightful retreat. There was a small dressing-table in front of a long glass, and here the ex-needlewoman sat, out of patience with Plaisir, the famous hairdresser.

"Do you think you will have done to-day?" said she.

"Your hair is so long and so thick, madame," replied Plaisir.

Caroline could not help smiling. The man's flattery had no doubt revived in her mind the memory of the passionate praises lavished by her lover on the beauty of her hair, in which he delighted.

The hairdresser having done, a waiting-maid came and held counsel with her as to the dress in which Roger would like best to see her. It was in the beginning of September, 1816, and the weather was cold; she chose a green grenadine trimmed with chinchilla. As soon as she was dressed, Caroline flew into the drawing-room and opened a window, out of which she stepped on to the elegant balcony that adorned the front of the house; there she stood, with her arms crossed, in a charming attitude, not to show herself to the admiration of the passers-by and see them turn to gaze at her, but to be

able to look out on the boulevard at the bottom of the Rue Taitbout. This side view, really very comparable to the peep-hole made by actors in the drop-scene of a theatre, enabled her to catch a glimpse of numbers of elegant carriages, and a crowd of persons, swept past with the rapidity of *Ombres Chinoises* (phantasmagoria). Not knowing whether Roger would arrive in a carriage or on foot, the needlewoman from the Rue du Tourniquet looked by turns at the foot-passengers and at the tilburies—light cabs introduced into Paris by the English.

What disdain, what indifference were shown in her beautiful features for all the other creatures who were bustling like ants below her feet. Her gray eyes, sparkling with fun, now positively flamed. Given over to her passion, she avoided admiration with as much care as the proudest devotee to encouraging it when they drive about Paris, certainly feeling no care as to whether her fair countenance leaning over the balcony, or her little foot between the bars, and the picture of her bright eyes and delicious turned-up nose would be effaced or not from the minds of the passers-by who admired them; she saw but one face, and had but one idea. When the spotted head of a certain bay horse happened to cross the narrow strip between the two rows of houses, Caroline gave a little shiver and stood on tiptoe in hope of recognizing the white traces and the color of the tilbury. It was he!

Roger turned the corner of the street, saw the balcony, whipped the horse, which came up at a gallop, and stopped at the bronze-green door that he knew as well as his master did. Roger rushed up to the drawing-room, clasped Caroline in his arms, and embraced her with the effusive feeling natural when two beings who love each other rarely meet. He led her, or rather they went by a common impulse, their arms about each other, into the quiet and fragrant bedroom; a settee stood ready for them to sit by the fire, and for a moment they looked at each other in silence, expressing their happiness

only by their clasped hands, and communicating their thoughts in a fond gaze.

"Yes, it is he!" she said at last. "Yes, it is you. Do you know, I have not seen you for three long days, an age! But what is the matter? You are unhappy."

"My poor Caroline——"

"There, you see! 'poor Caroline.'"

"No, no, do not laugh, my darling; we cannot go to the Feydeau Theatre together this evening."

Caroline put on a little pout, but it vanished immediately.

"How absurd I am! How can I think of going to the play when I see you? Is not the sight of you the only spectacle I care for?" she cried, pushing her fingers through Roger's hair.

"I am obliged to go to the attorney-general's. We have a knotty case in hand. He met me in the great hall at the Palais; and as I am to plead, he asked me to dine with him. But, my dearest, you can go to the theatre with your mother, and I will join you if the meeting breaks up early."

"To the theatre without you!" cried she in a tone of amazement; "enjoy any pleasure you do not share! O my Roger! you do not deserve a kiss," she added, throwing her arms round his neck with an artless and impassioned impulse.

"Caroline, I must go home and dress. The Marais is some way off, and I still have some business to finish."

"Take care of what you are saying, monsieur," said she, interrupting him. "My mother says that when a man begins to talk about his business, he is ceasing to love."

"Caroline! Am I not here? Have I not stolen this hour from my pitiless——"

"Hush!" said she, laying a finger on his mouth. "Don't you see that I am in jest?"

They had now come back to the drawing-room, and Roger's eye fell on an object brought home that morning by the cabinetmaker. Caroline's old rosewood embroidery-frame,

by which she and her mother had earned their bread when they lived in the Rue du Tourniquet-Saint-Jean, had been refitted and polished, and a net dress, of elaborate design, was already stretched upon it.

"Well, then, my dear, I shall do some work this evening. As I stitch, I shall fancy myself gone back to those early days when you used to pass by me without a word, but not without a glance; the days when the remembrance of your look kept me awake all night. O my dear old frame—the best piece of furniture in my room, though you did not give it me! You cannot think," said she, seating herself on Roger's knees; for he, overcome by irresistible feelings, had dropped into a chair. "Listen. All I can earn by my work I mean to give to the poor. You have made me rich. How I love that pretty home at Bellefeuille, less because of what it is than because you gave it me! But tell me, Roger, I should like to call myself Caroline de Bellefeuille—can I? You must know: is it legal or permissible?"

As she saw a little affirmative grimace—for Roger hated the name of Crochard—Caroline jumped for glee and clapped her hands.

"I feel," said she, "as if I should more especially belong to you. Usually a woman gives up her own name and takes her husband's——" An idea forced itself upon her and made her blush. She took Roger's hand and led him to the open piano. "Listen," said she, "I can play my sonata now like an angel!" and her fingers were already running over the ivory keys, when she felt herself seized round the waist.

"Caroline, I ought to be far from hence!"

"You insist on going? Well, go," said she, with a pretty pout, but she smiled as she looked at the clock and exclaimed joyfully: "At any rate, I have detained you a quarter of an hour!"

"Adieu, Mademoiselle de Bellefeuille," said he, with the gentle irony of love.

She kissed him and saw her lover to the door; when the sound of his steps had died away on the stairs, she ran out on to the balcony to see him get into the tilbury, to see him gather up the reins, to catch a parting look, hear the crack of his whip and the sound of his wheels on the stones, watch the handsome horse, the master's hat, the tiger's gold lace, and at last to stand gazing long after the dark corner of the street had eclipsed this vision.

Five years after Mademoiselle Caroline de Bellefeuille had taken up her abode in the pretty house in the Rue Taitbout, we again look in on one of those home-scenes which tighten the bonds of affection between two persons who truly love. In the middle of the blue drawing-room, in front of the window opening to the balcony, a little boy of four was making a tremendous noise as he whipped the rocking-horse, whose two curved supports for the legs did not move fast enough to please him; his pretty face, framed in fair curls that fell over his white collar, smiled up like a cherub's at his mother when she said to him from the depths of an easy-chair: "Not so much noise, Charles; you will wake your little sister."

The inquisitive boy suddenly got off his horse, and treading on tiptoe as if he were afraid of the sound of his feet on the carpet, came up with one finger between his little teeth, and standing in one of those childish attitudes that are so graceful because they are so perfectly natural, raised the muslin veil that hid the rosy face of a little girl sleeping on her mother's knee.

"Is Eugénie asleep, then?" said he, quite astonished. "Why is she asleep when we are awake?" he added, looking up with large, liquid black eyes.

"That only God can know," replied Caroline with a smile.

The mother and boy gazed at the infant, only that morning baptized.

Caroline, now about four-and-twenty, showed the ripe beauty which had expanded under the influence of cloudless happiness and constant enjoyment. In her the Woman was complete.

Delighted to obey her dear Roger's every wish, she had acquired the accomplishments she had lacked; she played the piano fairly well, and sang sweetly. Ignorant of the customs of a world that would have treated her as an outcast, and which she would not have cared for even if it had welcomed her—for a happy woman does not care for the world—she had not caught the elegance of manner or learned the art of conversation, abounding in words and devoid of ideas, which is current in fashionable drawing-rooms; on the other hand, she worked hard to gain the knowledge indispensable to a mother whose chief ambition is to bring up her children well. Never to lose sight of her boy, to give him from the cradle that training of every minute which impresses on the young a love of all that is good and beautiful, to shelter him from every evil influence and fulfill both the painful duties of a nurse and the tender offices of a mother—these were her chief pleasures.

The coy and gentle being had from the first day so fully resigned herself never to step beyond the enchanted sphere where she found all her happiness, that, after six years of the tenderest intimacy, she still knew her lover only by the name of Roger. A print of the picture of Psyche lighting her lamp to gaze on Love in spite of his prohibition hung in her room, and constantly reminded her of the conditions of her happiness. Through all these six years her humble pleasures had never importuned Roger by a single indiscreet ambition, and his heart was a treasure-house of kindness. Never had she longed for diamonds or fine clothes, and had again and again refused the luxury of a carriage which he had offered her.

As she rocked the infant, now a few months old, on her knee, singing the while, she allowed herself to recall the memories of the past. She lingered more especially on the

months of September, when Roger was accustomed to take her to Bellefeuille and spend the delightful days which seem to combine the charms of every season. Nature is equally prodigal of flowers and fruit, the evenings are mild, the mornings bright, and a blaze of summer often returns after a spell of autumn gloom. During the early days of their love, Caroline had ascribed the even mind and gentle temper, of which Roger gave her so many proofs, to the rarity of their always longed-for meetings, and to their mode of life, which did not compel them to be constantly together, as a husband and wife must be. But now she could remember with rapture that, tortured by foolish fears, she had watched him with trembling during their first stay on this little estate in the Gatinais. Vain suspiciousness of love! Each of these months of happiness had passed like a dream in the midst of joys which never rang false.

But invincible curiosity led her to wonder for the thousandth time what events they could be that had led so tender a heart as Roger's to find his pleasure in clandestine and illicit happiness. She invented a thousand romances on purpose really to avoid recognizing the true reason, which she had long suspected but tried not to believe. She rose, and, carrying the baby in her arms, went into the dining-room to superintend the preparations for dinner.

It was the 6th of May, 1822, the anniversary of the excursion to the Park of Saint-Leu, which had been the turning-point of her life; each year it had been marked by heartfelt rejoicing. Caroline chose the linen to be used, and arranged the dessert. Having attended with joy to these details, which touched Roger, she placed the infant in her pretty cot and went out on to the balcony, whence she presently saw the carriage which her friend, as he grew to riper years, now used instead of the smart tilbury of his youth. After submitting to the first fire of Caroline's embraces and the kisses of the little rogue who addressed him as papa, Roger went to the cradle,

looked at his little sleeping daughter, kissed her forehead, and then took out of his pocket a document covered with black writing.

"Caroline," said he, "here is the marriage portion of Mademoiselle Eugénie de Bellefeuille."

The mother gratefully took the paper, a deed of gift of securities in the State funds.

"But why," said she, "have you given Eugénie three thousand francs a year, and Charles no more than fifteen hundred?"

"Charles, my love, will be a man," replied he. "Fifteen hundred francs are enough for him. With so much for certain, a man of courage is above poverty. And if by chance your son should turn out a nonentity, I do not wish him to be able to play the fool. If he is ambitious, this small income will give him a taste for work. Eugénie is a girl; she must have a little fortune."

The father then turned to play with his boy, whose effusive affection showed the independence and freedom in which he was brought up. No sort of shyness between the father and child interfered with the charm which rewards a parent for his devotion; and the cheerfulness of the little family was as sweet as it was genuine. In the evening a magic-lantern displayed its illusions and mysterious pictures on a white sheet, to Charles' great surprise, and more than once the innocent child's heavenly rapture made Caroline and Roger laugh heartily.

Later, when the little boy was in bed, the baby woke and craved its limpid nourishment. By the light of a lamp, in the chimney-corner, Roger enjoyed the scene of peace and comfort, and gave himself up to the happiness of contemplating the sweet picture of the child clinging to Caroline's white bosom as she sat, as *fres* has a newly opened lily, while her hair fell in long brown curls that almost hid her neck.

The calm and silent woman's face struck Roger as a thou-

sand times sweeter than ever, and he gazed tenderly at the rosy, pouting lips from which no harsh word had ever been heard. The very same thought was legible in Caroline's eyes as she gave a side-long look at Roger, either to enjoy the effect she was producing on him, or to see what the end of the evening was to be. He, understanding the meaning of this cunning glance, said with assumed regret: "I must be going. I have a serious case to be finished, and I am expected at home. Duty before all things—don't you think so, my darling?"

Caroline looked him in the face with an expression at once sad and sweet, with the resignation which does not, however, disguise the pangs of a sacrifice.

"Adieu, then," said she. "Go, for if you stay an hour longer I cannot so lightly bear to set you free."

"My dearest," said he with a smile, "I have three days' holiday, and am supposed to be twenty leagues away from Paris."

A few days after this anniversary of the 6th of May, Made-moiselle de Bellefeuille hurried off one morning to the Rue Saint-Louis, in the Marais, only hoping she might not arrive too late at a house where she commonly went once a week. An express messenger had just come to inform her that her mother, Madame Crochard, was sinking under a complication of disorders produced by constant catarrh and rheumatism.

While the hackney-coach driver was flogging up his horses at Caroline's urgent request, supported by the promise of a handsome present, the timid old women, who had been Madame Crochard's friends during her later years, had brought a priest into the neat and comfortable third-floor rooms occupied by the old widow. Madame Crochard's maid did not know that the pretty lady at whose house her mistress so often dined was her daughter, and she was one of the first to suggest the services of a confessor, in the hope that this priest might be

at least as useful to herself as to the sick woman. Between two games of boston, or out walking in the Jardin Turc, the old beldames with whom the widow gossiped all day had succeeded in rousing in their friend's stony heart some scruples as to her former life, some visions of the future, some fears of hell, and some hopes of forgiveness if she should return in sincerity to a religious life. So on this solemn morning three ancient females had settled themselves in the drawing-room where Madame Crochard was "at home" every Tuesday. Each in turn left her armchair to go to the poor old woman's bedside and to sit with her, giving her the false hopes with which people delude the dying.

At the same time, when the end was drawing near, when the physician called in the day before would no longer answer for her life, the three dames took counsel together as to whether it would not be well to send word to Mademoiselle de Bellefeuille. Françoise having been duly informed, it was decided that a commissionaire should go to the Rue Taitbout to inform the young relation whose influence was so disquieting to the four women; still, they hoped that the Auvergnat would be too late in bringing back the person who so certainly held the first place in the widow Crochard's affections. The widow, evidently in the enjoyment of a thousand crowns a year, would not have been so fondly cherished by this feminine trio, but that neither of them, nor Françoise herself, knew of her having any heir. The wealth enjoyed by Mademoiselle de Bellefeuille, whom Madame Crochard, in obedience to the traditions of the older opera, never allowed herself to speak of by the affectionate name of daughter, almost justified the four women in their scheme of dividing among themselves the old woman's "pickings."

Presently the one of these three sibyls who kept guard over the sick woman came shaking her head at the other anxious two, and said:

"It is time we should be sending for the Abbé Fontanon.

In another two hours she will neither have the wit nor the strength to write a line."

Thereupon the toothless old cook went off, and returned with a man wearing a black cassock. A low forehead showed a small mind in this priest, whose features were mean; his flabby, fat cheeks and double chin betrayed the easy-going egotist; his powdered hair gave him a pleasant look, till he raised his small, brown eyes, prominent under a flat forehead, and not unworthy to glitter under the brows of a Tartar.

"Monsieur l'Abbé," said Françoise, "I thank you for all your advice; but, believe me, I have taken the greatest care of the dear soul."

But the servant, with her dragging step and woe-begone look, was silent when she saw that the door of the apartments was open, and that the most insinuating of the three dowagers was standing on the landing to be the first to speak with the confessor. When the priest had politely faced the honeyed and bigoted broadside of words fired off from the widow's three friends, he went into the sickroom to sit by Madame Crochard. Decency, and some sense of reserve, compelled the three women and old Françoise to remain in the sitting-room, and to make such grimaces of grief as are possible in perfection only to such wrinkled faces.

"Oh, is it not ill-luck?" cried Françoise, heaving a sigh. "This is the fourth mistress I have buried. The first left me a hundred francs a year, the second a sum of fifty crowns, and the third a thousand crowns down. After thirty years' service, that is all I have to call my own."

The woman took advantage of her freedom to come and go, to slip into a closet, whence she could hear the priest.

"I see with pleasure, daughter," said Fontanon, "that you have pious sentiments; you have a sacred relic round your neck."

Madame Crochard, with a feeble vagueness which seemed to show that she had not all her wits about her, pulled out the

imperial cross of the Legion of Honor. The priest started back at seeing the Emperor's head; he went up to the penitent again, and she spoke to him, but in such a low tone that for some minutes Françoise could hear nothing.

"Woe upon me!" cried the old woman suddenly. "Do not desert me. What, Monsieur l'Abbé, do you think I shall be called to account for my daughter's soul?"

The abbé spoke too low, and the partition was too thick for Françoise to hear the reply.

"Alas!" sobbed the woman, "the wretch has left me nothing that I can bequeath. When he robbed me of my dear Caroline, he parted us, and only allowed me three thousand francs a year, of which the capital belongs to my daughter."

"Madame has a daughter, and nothing to live on but an annuity," shrieked Françoise, bursting into the drawing-room.

The three old crones looked at each other in dismay. One of them, whose nose and chin nearly met, with an expression that betrayed a superior type of hypocrisy and cunning, winked her eyes; and as soon as Françoise's back was turned she gave her friends a nod, as much as to say: "That slut is too knowing by half; her name has figured in three wills already."

So the three old dames sat on.

However, the abbé presently came out, and at a word from him the witches scuttered down the stairs at his heels, leaving Françoise alone with her mistress. Madame Crochard, whose sufferings increased in severity, rang, but in vain, for this woman, who only called out: "Coming, coming—in a minute!" The doors of cupboards and wardrobes were slamming as though Françoise were hunting high and low for a lost lottery ticket.

Just as this crisis was at a climax, Mademoiselle de Bellefeuille came to stand by her mother's bed, lavishing tender words on her.

“O my dear mother, how criminal I have been! You are ill, and I did not know it; my heart did not warn me. However, here I am——”

“Caroline——”

“What is it?”

“They fetched a priest——”

“But send for a doctor, bless me!” cried Mademoiselle de Bellefeuille. “Françoise, a doctor! How is it that those ladies never sent for a doctor?”

“They sent for a priest——” repeated the old woman, with a gasp.

“She is so ill!—and no soothing draught, nothing on her table!”

The mother made a vague sign, which Caroline’s watchful eye understood, for she was silent to let her mother speak.

“They brought a priest—to hear my confession, as they said. Beware, Caroline!” cried the old woman with a manifest effort, “the priest made me tell him your benefactor’s name.”

“But who can have told you, poor mother?”

The old woman died, trying to look knowingly cunning. If Mademoiselle de Bellefeuille had noted her mother’s face, she might have seen what no one ever will see—Death laughing.

To enter into the interests that lay beneath this introduction to my tale, we must for a moment forget the actors in it, and look back at certain previous incidents, of which the last was closely concerned with the death of Madame Crochard. The two parts will then form a whole—a story which, by a law peculiar to life in Paris, was made up of two distinct sets of actions.

Toward the close of the month of November, 1805, a young barrister, aged about six-and-twenty, was going down the stairs of the hotel where the high chancellor of the Empire resided, at about three o’clock one morning. Having reached the

courtyard in full evening dress, under a keen frost, he could not help giving vent to an exclamation of dismay—qualified, however, by the spirit which rarely deserts a Frenchman—at seeing no hackney-coach waiting outside the gates, and hearing no noises such as arise from the wooden shoes or harsh voices of the hackney-coachmen of Paris. The occasional pawing of the horses of the chief justice's carriage—the young man having left him still playing *bouillote* with Cambacérès—alone rang out in the paved court, which was scarcely lighted by the carriage lamps. Suddenly the young lawyer felt a friendly hand on his shoulder, and, turning round, found himself face to face with the judge, to whom he bowed. As the footman let down the steps of his carriage, the old gentleman, who had served the Convention, suspected the junior's dilemma.

"In the dark all cats are gray," said he good-humoredly. "The chief justice cannot compromise himself by putting a pleader in the right way! Especially," he went on, "when that barrister is the nephew of an old colleague, one of the lights of the grand Council of State which gave to France the Napoleonic Code."

At a gesture from the chief magistrate of France under the Empire, the foot-passenger got into the carriage.

"Where do you live?" asked the great man, before the footman who awaited his orders had closed the door.

"Quai des Augustins, my lord."

The horses started, and the young man found himself alone with the minister, to whom he had vainly tried to speak before and after the sumptuous dinner given by Cambacérès; in fact, the great man had evidently avoided him throughout the evening.

"Well, Monsieur *de* Granville, you are on the high road!"

"So long as I sit by your excellency's side——"

"Nay, I am not jesting," said the minister. "You were called two years since, and your defense in the case of

Simeuse and Hauteserre has raised you high in your profession."

"I had supposed that my interest in those unfortunate émigrés had done me no good."

"You are still very young," said the great man gravely. "But the high chancellor," he went on, after a pause, "was greatly pleased with you this evening. Get a judgeship in the lower courts; we want men. The nephew of a man in whom Cambacérès and I take great interest must not remain in the background for lack of encouragement. Your uncle helped us to tide over a very stormy season, and services of that kind are not to be forgotten." The minister sat silent for a few minutes. "Before long," he went on, "I shall have three vacancies open in the lower Courts and in the Imperial Court in Paris. Come to see me, and take the place you prefer. Till then work hard, but do not be seen at my receptions. In the first place, I am overwhelmed with work; and beside that, your rivals may suspect your purpose and do you harm with the patron. Cambacérès and I, by not speaking a word to you this evening, have averted the accusation of favoritism."

As the great man ceased speaking, the carriage drew up on the Quai des Augustins; the young lawyer thanked his generous patron for the two lifts he had conferred on him, and then knocked at his door pretty loudly, for the bitter wind blew cold about his calves. At last the old lodgekeeper pulled up the latch, and, as the young man passed his window, called out in a hoarse voice: "Monsieur Granville, here is a letter for you."

The young man took the letter, and, in spite of the cold, tried to identify the writing by the gleam of a dull lamp fast dying out. "From my father!" he exclaimed, as he took his bedroom candle, which the porter at last had lighted. And he ran up to his room to read the following epistle:

“Set off by the next mail ; and if you can get here soon enough, your fortune is made. Mademoiselle Angélique Bontems has lost her sister ; she is now an only child ; and, as we know, she does not hate you. Madame Bontems can now leave her about forty thousand francs a year, beside whatever she may give her when she marries. I have prepared the way.

“Our friends will wonder to see a family of old nobility allying itself to the Bontems ; old Bontems was a red republican of the deepest dye, owning large quantities of the nationalized land, that he bought for a mere song. But he held nothing but convent lands, and the monks will not come back ; and then, as you have already so far derogated as to become a lawyer, I cannot see why we should shrink from a further concession to the prevalent ideas. The girl will have three hundred thousand francs ; I can give you a hundred thousand ; your mother’s property must be worth fifty thousand crowns, more or less ; so if you choose to take a judgeship, my dear son, you are quite in a position to become a senator as much as any other man. My brother-in-law the councilor of State will not indeed lend you a helping hand ; still, as he is not married, his property will some day be yours, and if you are not senator by your own efforts, you will get it through him. Then you will be perched high enough to look on at events. Farewell. Yours affectionately.”

So young Granville went to bed full of schemes, each fairer than the last. Under the powerful protection of the high chancellor, the chief justice, and his mother’s brother—one of the originators of the Code—he was about to make a start in a coveted position before the highest court of the Empire, and he already saw himself a member of the bench whence Napoleon selected the chief functionaries of the realm. He could also promise himself a fortune handsome enough to keep up his rank, for which the slender income of five thousand

francs from an estate left him by his mother would be quite insufficient.

To crown his ambitious dreams with a vision of happiness, he called up the guileless face of Mademoiselle Angélique Bontems, the companion of his childhood. Until he came to boyhood his father and mother had made no objection to his intimacy with their neighbor's pretty little daughter; but when, during his brief holiday visits to Bayeux, his parents, who prided themselves on their good birth, saw what friends the young people were, they forbade his ever thinking of her. Thus for ten years past Granville had only had occasional glimpses of the girl, whom he still sometimes thought of as "his little wife." And in those brief moments when they met free from the active watchfulness of their families, they had scarcely exchanged a few vague civilities at the church-door or in the street. Their happiest days had been those when, brought together by one of those country festivities known in Normandy as "*Assemblées*," they could steal a glance at each other from afar.

In the course of the last vacation Granville had twice seen Angélique, and her downcast eyes and drooping attitude had led him to suppose that she was crushed by some unknown tyranny.

He was off by seven next morning to the coach office in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires, and was so lucky as to find a vacant seat in the diligence then starting for Caen.

It was not without deep emotion that the young lawyer saw once more the spires of the cathedral at Bayeux. As yet no hope of his life had been cheated, and his heart swelled with the generous feelings that expand in the youthful soul.

After the too lengthy feast of welcome prepared by his father, who awaited him with some friends, the impatient youth was conducted to a house, long familiar to him, standing in the Rue Teinture. His heart beat high when his father—still known in the town of Bayeux as the Comte de Granville

—knocked loudly at a carriage gate off which the green paint was dropping in scales. It was about four in the afternoon. A young maidservant, in a cotton cap, dropped a short curtsy to the two gentlemen, and said that the ladies would soon be home from vespers.

The count and his son were shown into a low room used as a drawing-room, but more like a convent parlor. Polished panels of dark walnut made it gloomy enough, and around it some old-fashioned chairs, covered with worsted-work, and stiff armchairs were symmetrically arranged. The stone mantel had no ornament but a discolored mirror, and on each side of it were the twisted branches of a pair of candle-brackets, such as were made at the time of the Peace of Utrecht. Against a panel opposite, young Granville saw an enormous crucifix of ebony and ivory surrounded by a wreath of box that had been blessed. Though there were three windows to the room, looking out on a country-town garden, laid out in formal square beds edged with box, the room was so dark that it was difficult to discern, on the wall opposite the windows, three pictures of sacred subjects painted by a skilled hand, and purchased, no doubt, during the Revolution by old Bontems, who, as governor of the district, had never neglected his opportunities. From the carefully polished floor to the green, checked Holland-linen curtains everything shone with conventual cleanliness.

The young man's heart felt an involuntary chill in this silent retreat where Angélique dwelt. The habit of frequenting the glittering Paris drawing-rooms, and the constant whirl of society, had effaced from his memory the dull and peaceful surroundings of a country life, and the contrast was so startling as to give him a sort of internal shiver. To have just left a party at the house of Cambacérès, where life was so large, where minds could expand, where the splendor of the Imperial Court was so vividly reflected, and to be dropped suddenly into a sphere of squalid, narrow ideas—was it not like

a leap from Italy into Greenland? "Living here is not life!" said he to himself, as he looked round the methodistical room. The old count, seeing his son's dismay, went up to him, and, taking his hand, led him to a window, where there was still a gleam of daylight, and while the maid was lighting the yellow tapers in the candle branches he tried his best to clear away the lowering clouds that the dreary place had brought to his brow.

"Listen, my boy," said he. "Old Bontems' widow is a frenzied bigot. 'When the devil is old——' you know! I see that the place goes against the grain. Well, this is the whole truth; the old woman is priest-ridden; they have persuaded her that it is high time to make sure of heaven, and the better to secure Saint-Peter and his keys she pays beforehand. She goes to mass every day, attends every service, takes the communion every Sunday God has made, and amuses herself by restoring chapels. She has given so many ornaments, and albs, and chasubles, she has crowned the canopy with so many feathers, that on the occasion of the last Corpus Christi procession as great a crowd came together as to see a man hanged, just to stare at the priests in their splendid dresses and all the vessels regilt. This house, too, is a sort of Holy Land. It was I who hindered her from giving those three pictures to the church—a Domenichino, a Correggio, and an Andrea del Sarto—worth a good deal of money."

"But Angélique?" asked the young man.

"If you do not marry her, Angélique is done for," said the count. "Our holy apostles counsel her to live a virgin martyr. I have had the utmost difficulty in stirring up her little heart, since she has been the only child, by talking to her of you; but, as you will easily understand, as soon as she is married you will carry her off to Paris. There festivities, married life, the theatres, and the rush of Parisian society will soon make her forget confessionals, and fasting, and hair

shirts, and masses, which are the exclusive nourishment of such creatures."

"But the fifty thousand francs a year derived from church property? Will not all that return——?"

"That is the point!" exclaimed the count, with a cunning glance. "In consideration of this marriage—for Madame Bontems' vanity is not a little flattered by the notion of grafting the Bontems on to the genealogical tree of the Granvilles—the aforementioned mother agrees to settle her fortune absolutely on the girl, reserving only a life-interest. The priesthood, therefore, are set against the marriage; but I have had the banns published, everything is ready, and in a week you will be out of the clutches of the mother and her abbés. You will have the prettiest girl in Bayeux, a good little soul who will give you no trouble, because she has sound principles. She has been mortified, as they say in their jargon, by fasting and prayer—and," he added in a low voice, "by her mother."

A modest tap at the door silenced the count, who expected to see the two ladies appear. A little page came in, evidently in a great hurry; but, abashed by the presence of the two gentlemen, he beckoned to a housekeeper, who followed him. Dressed in a blue cloth jacket with short tails, and blue-and-white striped trousers, his hair cut short all round, the boy's expression was that of a chorister, so strongly was it stamped with the compulsory propriety that marks every member of a bigoted household.

"Mademoiselle Gatienne," said he, "do you know where the books are for the office of the Virgin? The ladies of the congregation of the Sacred Heart are going in procession this evening round the church."

Gatienne went in search of the books.

"Will they go on much longer, my little man?" asked the count.

"Oh, half an hour at most."

"Let us go to look on," said the father to his son. "There will be some pretty women there, and a visit to the cathedral can do us no harm."

The young lawyer followed him with a doubtful expression.

"What is the matter?" said the count.

"The matter, father, is that I am sure I am right."

"But you have said nothing."

"No; but I have been thinking that you have still ten thousand francs a year left of your original fortune. You will leave them to me—as long a time hence as possible, I hope. But if you are ready to give me a hundred thousand francs to make a foolish match, you will surely allow me to ask you for only fifty thousand to save me from such a misfortune, and enjoy as a bachelor a fortune equal to what your Mademoiselle Bontems would bring me."

"Are you crazy?"

"No, father. These are the facts: The chief justice promised me yesterday that I should have a seat on the bench. Fifty thousand francs added to what I have, and to the pay of my appointment, will give me an income of twelve thousand francs a year. And I then shall most certainly have a chance of marrying a fortune, better than this alliance, which will be poor in happiness if rich in goods."

"It is very clear," said his father, "that you were not brought up under the old *régime*. Does a man of our rank ever allow his wife to be in his way?"

"But, my dear father, in these days marriage is——"

"Bless me!" cried the count, interrupting his son, "then what my old *émigré* friends tell me is true, I suppose. The Revolution has left us habits devoid of pleasure, and has infected all the young men with vulgar principles. You, like my Jacobin brother-in-law, will harangue me, I suppose, on the Nation, Public Morals, and Disinterestedness! Good heavens! But for the Emperor's sisters, where should we be?"

The still hale old man, whom the peasants on the estate persisted in calling the Seigneur de Granville, ended his speech as they entered the cathedral porch. In spite of the sanctity of the place, and even as he dipped his fingers in the holy water, he hummed an air from the opera of "*Rose et Colas*," and then led the way down the side-aisles, stopping by each pillar to survey the rows of heads, all in lines like ranks of soldiers on parade.

The special service of the Sacred Heart was about to begin. The ladies affiliated to that congregation were in front near the choir, so the count and his son made their way to that part of the nave, and stood leaning against one of the columns where there was least light, whence they could command a view of this mass of faces, looking like a meadow full of flowers. Suddenly, close to young Granville, a voice, sweeter than it seemed possible to ascribe to a human being, broke into song, like the first nightingale when winter is past. Though it mingled with the voices of a thousand other women and the notes of the organ, that voice stirred his nerves as though they vibrated to the too full and too piercing sounds of a harmonium. The Parisian turned round, and, seeing a young figure, though, the head being bent, her face was entirely concealed by a large white bonnet, concluded that the voice was hers. He fancied that he recognized Angélique in spite of a brown merino pelisse that enwrapped her, and he nudged his father's elbow.

"Yes, there she is," said the count, after looking where his son pointed. And then, by an expressive glance, he directed his attention to the pale face of an elderly woman who had already detected the strangers, though her false eyes, deep set in dark circles, did not seem to have strayed from the prayer-book she held.

Angélique raised her face, gazing at the altar as if to inhale the heavy scent of the incense that came wafted in clouds over the two women. And then, in the doubtful light that

the tapers shed down the nave, with that of a central lamp and of some lights round the pillars, the young man beheld a face which shook his determination. A white watered-silk bonnet closely framed features of perfect regularity, the oval being completed by the satin ribbon tie that fastened it under her dimpled chin. Over her forehead, very sweet though low, hair of a pale gold color parted in two bands and fell over her cheeks, like the shadow of leaves on a flower. The arches of her eyebrows were drawn with the accuracy we admire in the best Chinese paintings. Her nose, almost aquiline in profile, was cut exceptionally firm, and her lips were like two rosy lines lovingly traced with a delicate brush. Her eyes, of a light blue, were expressive of innocence.

Granville was a prey to one single wish, and every thought of prudence vanished. By the time the service was ended, his impatience was so great that he could not leave the ladies to go home alone, but came at once to make his bow to "his little wife." They bashfully greeted each other in the cathedral porch in the presence of the congregation. Madame Bontems was tremulous with pride as she took the Comte de Granville's arm, though he, forced to offer it in the presence of all the world, was vexed enough with his son for his ill-advised impatience.

For about a fortnight, between the official announcement of the intended marriage of the Vicomte de Granville to Mademoiselle Bontems and the solemn day of the wedding, he came assiduously to visit his lady-love in the dismal drawing-room, to which he became accustomed. His long calls were devoted to watching Angélique's character; for his prudence, happily, had made itself heard again the day after their first meeting. He always found her seated at a little table of some West India wood, and engaged in marking the linen of her trousseau. Angélique never spoke first on the subject of religion. If the young lawyer amused himself with fingering the handsome rosary that she kept in a little green velvet bag,

if he laughed as he looked at a relic such as usually is attached to this means of grace, Angélique would gently take the rosary out of his hands and replace it in the bag without a word, putting it away at once. When, now and then, Granville was so bold as to make mischievous remarks as to certain religious practices, the pretty girl listened to him with the obstinate smile of assurance.

“You must either believe nothing, or believe everything the church teaches,” she would say. “Would you wish to have a woman without religion as the mother of your children? No. What man may dare judge as between disbelievers and God? And how can I then blame what the church allows?”

Granville committed the fatal blunder of mistaking the enchantment of desire for that of love. Angélique was so happy in reconciling the voice of her heart with that of duty, by giving way to a liking that had grown up with her from childhood, that the deluded man could not discern which of the two spoke the louder. Are not all young men ready to trust the promise of a pretty face and to infer beauty of soul from beauty of feature? An indefinable impulse leads them to believe that moral perfection must coexist with physical perfection. If Angélique had not been at liberty to give vent to her sentiments, they would soon have dried up in her heart like a plant watered with some deadly acid. How should a lover be aware of bigotry so well hidden?

This was the course of young Granville’s feelings during that fortnight, devoured by him like a book of which the end is absorbing. Angélique, carefully watched by him, seemed the gentlest of creatures, and he even caught himself feeling grateful to Madame Bontems, who, by implanting so deeply the principles of religion, had in some degree injured her to meet the troubles of life.

On the day named for signing the inevitable contract, Madame Bontems made her son-in-law pledge himself solemnly to respect her daughter’s religious practices, to allow her en-

tire liberty of conscience, to permit her to go to communion, to church, to confession as often as she pleased, and never to control her choice of priestly advisers. At this critical moment Angélique looked at her future husband with such pure and innocent eyes that Granville did not hesitate to give his word. A smile puckered the lips of the Abbé Fontanon, a pale man, who directed the consciences of this household. Mademoiselle Bontems, by a slight nod, seemed to promise that she would never take an unfair advantage of this freedom. As to the old count, he gently whistled the tune of an old song, *Va-t-en voir s'ils viennent* ("Go and see if they are coming on!").

A few days after the wedding festivities, of which so much is thought in the provinces, Granville and his wife went to Paris, whither the young man was recalled by his appointment as public prosecutor to the Supreme Court of the Seine circuit.

When the young couple set out to find a residence, Angélique used the influence that the honeymoon gives the bride in persuading her husband to take a suite of apartments on the first floor of a house at the corner of the Vieille Rue du Temple and the Rue Neuve Saint-François. Her chief reason for this choice was that the house was close to the Rue d'Orléans, where there was a church, and not far from a small chapel in the Rue Saint-Louis.

"A good housewife provides for everything," said her husband, laughing.

Angélique pointed out to him that this part of Paris, known as the Marais, was within easy reach of the Palais de Justice, and that the lawyers they knew lived in the neighborhood. A fairly large garden made the suite particularly advantageous to a young couple; the children—if heaven should send them any—could play in the open air; the courtyard was spacious, and there were good stables.

The lawyer wished to live in the Chaussée d'Antin, where everything is fresh and bright, where the fashions may be seen

while still new, where a well-dressed crowd throngs the boulevards, and the distance is less to the theatres or places of amusement ; but he was obliged to give way to the coaxing ways of a young wife, who asked this as a first favor ; so, to please her, he settled in the Marais. Granville's duties required him to work hard—all the more, because they were new to him—so he devoted himself in the first place to furnishing his private study and arranging his books. He was soon established in a room crammed with papers, and left the decoration of the house to his wife. He was all the better pleased to plunge Angélique into the bustle of buying furniture and fittings, the source of so much pleasure and of so many associations to most young women, because he was rather ashamed of depriving her of his company more often than the usages of early married life require. As soon as his work was fairly under way, he gladly allowed his wife to tempt him out of his study to consider the effect of furniture or hangings, which he had before only seen piecemeal or unfinished.

If the old adage is true that says a woman may be judged of from her front door, her rooms must express her mind with even greater fidelity. Madame de Granville had perhaps stamped the various things she had ordered with the seal of her own character ; the young lawyer was certainly startled by the cold, arid solemnity that reigned in these rooms ; he found nothing to charm his taste ; everything was discordant, nothing gratified the eye. The rigid mannerism that prevailed in the sitting-room at Bayeux had invaded his home ; the broad panels were hollowed in circles, and decorated with those arabesques of which the long, monotonous mouldings are in such bad taste. Anxious to find excuses for his wife, the young husband began again, looking first at the long and lofty anteroom through which the apartments were entered. The color of the panels, as ordered by his wife, was too heavy, and the very dark green velvet used to cover the

benches added to the gloom of this entrance—not, to be sure, an important room, but giving a first impression—just as we measure a man's intelligence by his first address. An ante-room is a kind of preface which announces what is to follow, but promises nothing.

The young husband wondered whether his wife could really have chosen the lamp of an antique pattern, which hung in the centre of this bare hall, the pavement of black and white marble, and the paper in imitation of blocks of stone, with green moss on them in places. A handsome, but not new, barometer hung on the middle of one of the walls, as if to accentuate the void. At the sight of it all, he looked round at his wife; he saw her so much pleased by the red braid binding to the cotton curtains, so satisfied with the barometer and the strictly decent statue that ornamented a large Gothic stove, that he had not the barbarous courage to overthrow such deep convictions. Instead of blaming his wife, Granville blamed himself, accusing himself of having failed in his duty of guiding the first steps in Paris of a girl brought up at Bayeux.

From this specimen, what might not be expected of the other rooms? What was to be looked for from a woman who took fright at the bare legs of a Caryatid, and who would not look at a chandelier or a candlestick if she saw on it the nude outlines of an Egyptian bust? At this date the school of David was at the height of its glory; all the art of France bore the stamp of his correct design and his love of antique types, which indeed gave his pictures the character of colored sculpture. But none of these devices of Imperial luxury found civic rights under Madame de Granville's roof. The spacious, square drawing-room remained as it had been left from the time of Louis XV., in white and tarnished gold, lavishly adorned by the architect with checkered lattice-work and the hideous garlands due to the uninventive designers of the time. Still, if harmony at least had prevailed, if the furniture of mod-

ern mahogany had but assumed the twisted forms of which Boucher's corrupt taste first set the fashion, Angélique's room would only have suggested the fantastic contrast of a young couple in the nineteenth century living as though they were in the eighteenth; but a number of details were in ridiculous discord. The consoles, the clocks, the candelabra, were decorated with the military trophies which the wars of the Empire commended to the affections of the Parisians; and the Greek helmets, the Roman crossed daggers, and the shields so dear to military enthusiasm that they were introduced on furniture of the most peaceful uses, had no fitness side by side with the delicate and profuse arabesques that delighted Madame de Pompadour.

Bigotry tends to an indescribably tiresome kind of humility which does not exclude pride. Whether from modesty or by choice, Madame de Granville seemed to have a horror of light and cheerful colors; perhaps, too, she imagined that brown and purple beseeemed the dignity of a magistrate. How could a girl accustomed to an austere life have admitted the luxurious divans that may suggest evil thoughts, the elegant and tempting boudoirs where naughtiness may be imagined!

The poor husband was in despair. From the tone in which he approved, only seconding the praises she bestowed on herself, Angélique understood that nothing really pleased him; and she expressed so much regret at her want of success, that Granville, who was very much in love, regarded her disappointment as a proof of her affection instead of resentment for an offense to her self-conceit. If he had been less in love, he would have understood that the dealers, always quick to discern their customers' ideas, had blessed heaven for sending them a tasteless little bigot, who would take their old-fashioned goods off their hands.

So he lovingly comforted the pretty provincial after this manner:

"Happiness, dear Angélique, does not depend on a more

or less elegant piece of furniture ; it depends on the wife's sweetness, gentleness, and love."

"Why, it is my duty to love you," said Angélique mildly, "and I can have no more delightful duty to carry out."

Nature has implanted in the heart of woman so great a desire to please, so deep a craving for love, that, even in a youthful bigot, the ideas of salvation and a future existence must give way to the happiness of early married life. And, in fact, from the month of April, when they were married, till the beginning of winter, the husband and wife lived in perfect union. Love and hard work have the grace of making a man tolerably indifferent to external matters. Being obliged to spend half the day in court fighting for the gravest interests of men's lives or fortunes, Granville was less alive than another might have been to certain facts quite apparent in his household.

If, on a Friday, he found none but Lenten fare, and by chance asked for a dish of meat without getting it, his wife, forbidden by the Gospel to tell a lie, could still, by such subterfuges as are permissible in the interests of religion, cloak what was premeditated purpose under some pretext of her own carelessness or the scarcity in the market. She would often exculpate herself at the expense of the cook, and even go so far as to scold him. At that time young lawyers did not, as they do now, keep the fasts of the church, the four rogation seasons, and the vigils of festivals ; so Granville was not at first aware of the regular recurrence of these Lenten meals, which his wife took care should be made dainty by the addition of teal, moor-hen, and fish-pies, that their amphibious meat or high seasoning might cheat his palate. Thus the young man unconsciously lived in strict orthodoxy, and worked out his salvation without knowing it.

On week-days he did not know whether his wife went to mass or not. On Sundays, with very natural amiability, he accompanied her to church to make up to her, as it were, for

sometimes giving up vespers in favor of his company; he could not at first fully enter into the strictness of his wife's religious views. The theatres being impossible in summer by reason of the heat, Granville had not even the opportunity of the great success of a piece to give rise to the serious question of playgoing. And, in short, at the early stage of a union to which a man has been led by a young girl's beauty, he can hardly be exacting as to his amusements. Youth is greedy rather than dainty, and possession has a charm in itself. How should he be keen to note coldness, dignity, and reserve in the woman to whom he ascribes the excitement he himself feels, and lends the glow of the fire that burns within him? He must have attained a certain conjugal calm before he discovers that a bigot sits waiting for love with her arms folded.

Granville, therefore, believed himself happy till a fatal event brought its influence to bear on his married life. In the month of November, 1808, the canon of Bayeux cathedral, who had been the keeper of Madame Bontems' conscience and her daughter's, came to Paris, spurred by the ambition to be at the head of a church in the capital—a position which he regarded perhaps as the stepping-stone to a bishopric. On resuming his former control of this wandering lamb, he was horrified to find her already so much deteriorated by the air of Paris, and strove to reclaim her to his chilly fold. Frightened by the exhortations of this priest, a man of about eight-and-thirty, who brought with him, into the circle of the enlightened and tolerant Paris clergy, the bitter provincial catholicism and the inflexible bigotry which fetter timid souls with endless exactions, Madame de Granville did penance and returned from her Jansenist errors.

It would be tiresome to describe minutely all the circumstances which insensibly brought disaster on this household; it will be enough to relate the simple facts without giving them in strict order of time.

The first misunderstanding between the young couple was, however, a serious one.

When Granville took his wife into society she never declined solemn functions, such as dinners, concerts, or parties given by the judges superior to her husband in the legal profession ; but for a long time she constantly excused herself on the plea of a sick headache when they were invited to a ball. One day Granville, out of patience with these assumed indispositions, destroyed a note of invitation to a ball at the house of a councilor of State, and gave his wife only a verbal invitation. Then, on the evening, her health being quite above suspicion, he took her to a magnificent entertainment.

"My dear," said he, on their return home, seeing her wear an offensive air of depression, "your position as a wife, the rank you hold in society, and the fortune you enjoy, impose on you certain duties of which no divine law can relieve you. Are you not your husband's pride? You are required to go to balls when I go, and to appear in a becoming manner."

"And what is there, my dear, so disastrous in my dress?"

"It is your manner, my dear. When a young man comes up to speak to you, you look so serious that a spiteful person might believe you doubtful of your own virtue. You seem to fear lest a smile should undo you. You really look as if you were asking forgiveness of God for the sins that may be committed around you. The world, my dearest, is not a convent. But, as you have mentioned your dress, I may confess to you that it is no less a duty to conform to the customs and fashions of society."

"Do you wish that I should display my shape like those indecent women who wear gowns so low that impudent eyes can stare at their bare shoulders and their——"

"There is a difference, my dear," said her husband, interrupting her, "between uncovering your whole bust and giving some grace to your dress. You wear three rows of net frills that cover your throat up to your chin. You look as if you

had desired your dressmaker to destroy the graceful line of your shoulders and bosom with as much care as a coquette would devote to obtaining from hers a bodice that might emphasize her covered form. Your bust is wrapped in so many folds that every one was laughing at your affectation of prudery. You would be really grieved if I were to repeat the ill-natured remarks made on your appearance."

"Those who admire such obscenity will not have to bear the burden if we sin," said the lady tartly.

"And you did not dance?" asked Granville.

"I shall never dance," she replied.

"If I tell you that you ought to dance!" said her husband sharply. "Yes, you ought to follow the fashions, to wear flowers in your hair, and diamonds. Remember, my dear, that rich people—and we are rich—are obliged to keep up luxury in the State. Is it not far better to encourage manufacturers than to distribute money in the form of alms through the medium of the clergy?"

"You talk as a statesman!" said Angélique.

"And you as a priest," he retorted.

The discussion was bitter. Madame de Granville's answers, though spoken very sweetly and in a voice as clear as a church bell, showed an obstinacy that betrayed priestly influence. When she appealed to the rights secured to her by Granville's promise, she added that her director specially forbade her going to balls; then her husband plainly demonstrated and pointed out to her that the priest was overstepping the regulations of the church.

This odious theological dispute was renewed with great violence and acerbity on both sides when Granville proposed to take his wife to the play. Finally, the lawyer, whose sole aim was to defeat the pernicious influence exerted over his wife by her old confessor, placed the question on such a footing that Madame de Granville, in a spirit of defiance, referred it by writing to the court of Rome, asking in so many words

whether a woman could wear low gowns and go to the play and to balls without compromising her salvation.

The reply of the venerable Pope Pius VII. came at once, strongly condemning the wife's recalcitrancy and blaming the priest. This letter, a chapter on conjugal duties, might have been dictated by the spirit of Fénelon, whose grace and tenderness pervaded every line.

"A wife is right to go wherever her husband may take her. Even if she sins by his command, she will not be ultimately held answerable." These two sentences of the pope's homily only made Madame de Granville and her director accuse him of irreligion.

But before this letter had arrived Granville had discovered the strict observance of fast days that his wife forced upon him, and gave his servants orders to serve him with meat every day in the year. However much annoyed his wife might be by these commands, Granville, who cared not a straw for such indulgence or abstinence, persisted with manly determination.

Is it not an offense to the weakest creature that can think at all to be compelled to do, by the will of another, anything that he would otherwise have done simply of his own accord? Of all forms of tyranny, the most odious is that which constantly robs the soul of the merit of its thoughts and deeds. It has to abdicate without having reigned. The word we are readiest to speak, the feelings we most love to express, die when we are commanded to utter them.

Ere long the young man ceased to invite his friends, to give parties or dinners; the house might have been shrouded in crepe. A house where the mistress is a bigot has an atmosphere of its own. The servants, who are, of course, under her immediate control, are chosen among a class who call themselves pious, and who have an unmistakable physiognomy. Just as the jolliest fellow alive, when he joins the gendarmes, has the countenance of a gendarme, so those who give themselves over to the practices of devotion acquire a uniform ex-

pression ; the habit of lowering their eyes and preserving a sanctimonious mien clothes them in a livery of hypocrisy which rogues can affect to perfection.

And beside, bigots constitute a sort of republic ; they all know each other ; the servants they recommend and hand on from one to another are a race apart, and preserved by them, as horse-breeders will admit no animal into their stables that has not a pedigree. The more the impious—as they are thought—come to understand a household of bigots, the more they perceive that everything is stamped with an indescribable squalor ; they find there, at the same time, an appearance of avarice and mystery, as in a miser's home, and the dank scent of cold incense which gives a chill to the stale atmosphere of a chapel. This methodical meanness, this narrowness of thought, which is visible in every detail, can only be expressed by one word—Bigotry. In these sinister and pitiless houses Bigotry is written on the furniture, the prints, the pictures ; speech is bigoted, the silence is bigoted, the faces are those of bigots. The transformation of men and things into bigotry is an inexplicable mystery, but the fact is evident. Everybody can see that bigots do not walk, do not sit, do not speak as men of the world walk, sit, and speak. Under their roof every one is ill at ease, no one laughs, stiffness and formality infect everything, from the mistress' cap down to her pin-cushion ; eyes are not honest, the folk move like shadows, and the lady of the house seems firmly perched on a throne of ice.

The home is not so much a tomb as that far worse thing—a convent. In the centre of this icy sphere the lawyer could study his wife dispassionately. He observed, not without keen regret, the narrow-mindedness that stood confessed in the very way that her hair grew, low on the forehead, which was slightly depressed ; he discovered in the perfect regularity of her features a certain set rigidity which before long made him hate the assumed sweetness that had bewitched him.

Intuition told him that one day of disaster those thin lips might say: "My dear, it is for your good!"

Madame de Granville's complexion was acquiring a dull pallor and an austere expression that were a kill-joy to all who came near her. Was this change wrought by the ascetic habits of a pharisaism which is not piety any more than avarice is economy? It would be hard to say. Beauty without expression is perhaps an imposture. The imperturbable set smile that the young wife always wore when she looked at Granville seemed to be a sort of jesuitical formula of happiness, by which she thought to satisfy all the requirements of married life. Her charity was an offense, her soulless beauty was monstrous to those who knew her; the mildness of her speech was an irritation: she acted, not on feeling, but on duty.

There are faults which may yield in a wife to the stern lessons of experience, or to a husband's warnings; but nothing can counteract false ideas of religion. An eternity of happiness to be won, set in the scale against worldly enjoyment, triumphs over everything and makes every pang enduring. Is it not the apotheosis of egotism, of Self beyond the grave? Thus even the pope was censured at the tribunal of the priest and the young devotee.

To be always in the right is a feeling which absorbs every other in these tyrannous souls.

For some time past a secret struggle had been going on between the ideas of the husband and wife, and the young man was soon weary of a battle to which there could be no end. What man, what temper, can endure the sight of a hypocritically affectionate face and categorical resistance to his slightest wishes? What is to be done with a wife who takes advantage of his passion to protect her coldness, who seems determined on being blandly inexorable, prepares herself ecstatically to play the martyr, and looks on her husband as a scourge from God, a means of flagellation that may spare her the fires of purgatory? What picture can give an idea of these women

who make virtue hateful by defying the gentle precepts of that faith which Saint John epitomized in the words: "Love one another?"

If there was a bonnet to be found in a milliner's store that was condemned to remain in the window or to be packed off to the colonies, Granville was certain to see it on his wife's head; if a material of bad color or hideous design were to be found, she would select it. These hapless bigots are heart-breaking in their notions of dress. Want of taste is a defect inseparable from false pietism.

And so, in the home-life that needs the fullest sympathy, Granville had no true companionship. He went out alone to parties and the theatres. Nothing in his house appealed to him. A huge crucifix that hung between his bed and Angélique's seemed figurative of his destiny. Does it not represent a murdered Divinity, a Man-God, done to death in all the prime of life and beauty? The ivory of that cross was less cold than Angélique crucifying her husband under the plea of virtue. This it was that lay at the root of their woes; the young wife saw nothing but duty where she should have given love. Here, one Ash Wednesday, rose the pale and spectral form of fasting in Lent, of total abstinence, commanded in a severe tone—and Granville did not deem it advisable to write in his turn to the pope and take the opinion of the consistory on the proper way of observing Lent, the Ember days, and the eve of great festivals.

He had a pretty young wife attached to her duties, virtuous—nay, a model of all the virtues. She had a child every year, nursed them herself, and brought them up in the highest principles. Being charitable, Angélique was promoted to rank as an angel. The old women who constituted the circle in which she moved—for at that time it was not yet "the thing" for young women to be religious as a matter of fashion—all admired Madame de Granville's piety, and regarded her, not indeed as a virgin, but as a martyr.

They blamed not the wife's scruples, but the barbarous philo-progenitiveness of the husband.

Granville, by insensible degrees, overdone with work, bereft of conjugal consolations, and weary of a world in which he wandered alone, by the time he was two-and-thirty had sunk into the Slough of Despond. He hated life. Having too lofty a notion of the responsibilities imposed on him by his position to set the example of a dissipated life, he tried to deaden feeling by hard study, and began a great book on Law.

But he was not allowed to enjoy the monastic peace he had hoped for. When the celestial Angélique saw him desert worldly society to work at home with such regularity, she tried to convert him. It had been a real sorrow to her to know that her husband's opinions were not strictly Christian; and she sometimes wept as she reflected that if her husband should die it would be in a state of final impenitence, so that she could not hope to snatch him from the eternal fires of hell. Thus Granville was the mark for the mean ideas, the vacuous arguments, the narrow views by which his wife—fancying she had achieved the first victory—tried to gain a second by bringing him back within the pale of the church.

This was the last straw. What can be more intolerable than the blind struggle in which the obstinacy of a bigot tries to meet the acumen of a lawyer? What more terrible to endure than the acrimonious pin-pricks to which a passionate soul prefers a dagger-thrust? Granville neglected his home. Everything there was unendurable. His children, broken by their mother's frigid despotism, dared not go with him to the play; indeed, Granville could never give them any pleasure without bringing down punishment from their terrible mother. His loving nature was weaned to indifference, to a selfishness worse than death. His boys, indeed, he saved from this hell by sending them to school at an early age, and insisting on his right to train them. He rarely interfered between his

wife and her daughters ; but he was resolved that they should marry as soon as they were old enough.

The improving history of this melancholy household gave rise to no events worthy of record during the fifteen years between 1806 and 1821. Madame de Granville was exactly the same after losing her husband's affection as she had been during the time when she called herself happy. She paid for masses, beseeching God and the saints to enlighten her as to what the faults were which displeased her husband, and to show her the way to restore the lost and erring sheep ; but the more fervent her prayers, the less was Granville to be seen at home.

For about five years now, having achieved a high position as a judge, Granville had occupied the entresol of the house to avoid living with the Comtesse de Granville. Every morning a little scene took place, which, if evil tongues are to be believed, is repeated in many households as the result of incompatibility of temper, of moral or physical malady, or of antagonisms leading to such disaster as is recorded in this history. At about eight in the morning a housekeeper, bearing no small resemblance to a nun, rang at the Comte de Granville's door. Admitted to the room next to the judge's study, she always repeated the same message to the footman, and always in the same tone—

“Madame would be glad to know whether Monsieur le Comte has had a good night, and if she is to have the pleasure of his company at breakfast.”

“Monsieur presents his compliments to Madame la Comtesse,” the valet would say, after speaking with his master, “and begs her to hold him excused ; important business compels him to be in court this morning.”

A minute later the woman reappeared and asked on madame's behalf whether she would have the pleasure of seeing Monsieur le Comte before he went out.

"He is gone," was always the reply, though often his carriage was still waiting.

This little dialogue by proxy became a daily ceremonial. Granville's servant, a favorite with his master, and the cause of more than one quarrel over his irreligious and dissipated conduct, would even go into his master's room, as a matter of form, when the count was not there, and come back with the same formula in reply.

The aggrieved wife was always on the watch for her husband's return, and standing on the steps so as to meet him like an embodiment of remorse. The petty aggressiveness which lies at the root of the monastic temper was the foundation of Madame de Granville's; she was now five-and-thirty, and looked forty. When the count was compelled by decency to speak to his wife or to dine at home, she was only too well pleased to inflict her company upon him, with her acid-sweet remarks and the intolerable dullness of her narrow-minded circle, and she tried to put him in the wrong before the servants and her charitable friends.

When, at this time, the post of president in a provincial court was offered to the Comte de Granville, who was in high favor, he begged to be allowed to remain in Paris. This refusal, of which the keeper of the seals alone knew the reasons, gave rise to extraordinary conjectures on the part of the countess' intimate friends and of her director. Granville, a rich man with a hundred thousand francs a year, belonged to one of the first families of Normandy. His appointment to be presiding judge would have been the stepping-stone to a peer's seat; whence this strange lack of ambition? Why had he given up his great book on Law? What was the meaning of the dissipation which for nearly six years had made him a stranger to his home, his family, his study, to all he ought to hold dear? The countess' confessor, who based his hopes of a bishopric quite as much on the families he governed as on the services he rendered to an association of which he was an

ardent propagator, was much disappointed by Granville's refusal, and tried to insinuate calumnious explanations: "If Monsieur le Comte had such an objection to provincial life, it was perhaps because he dreaded finding himself under the necessity of leading a regular life, compelled to set an example of moral conduct, and to live with the countess, from whom nothing could have alienated him but some illicit connection; for how could a woman so pure as Madame de Granville ever tolerate the disorderly life into which her husband had drifted?" The sanctimonious women accepted as facts these hints, which unluckily were not merely hypothetical, and Madame de Granville was stricken as by a thunderbolt.

Angélique, knowing nothing of the world, of love and its follies, was so far from conceiving of any conditions of married life unlike those that had alienated her husband as possible, that she believed him to be incapable of the errors which are crimes in the eyes of any wife. When the count ceased to demand anything of her, she imagined that the tranquillity he now seemed to enjoy was in the course of nature; and, as she had really given to him all the love which her heart was capable of feeling for a man, while the priest's conjectures were the utter destruction of the illusions she had hitherto cherished, she defended her husband: at the same time, she could not eradicate the suspicion that had been so ingeniously sown in her soul.

These alarms wrought such havoc in her feeble brain that they made her ill; she was worn by low fever. These incidents took place during Lent, 1822; she would not premit her austerities, and fell into a decline that put her life in danger. Granville's indifference was added torture; his care and attention were such as a nephew feels himself bound to give to some old uncle.

Though the countess had given up her persistent nagging and remonstrances, and tried to receive her husband with affectionate words, the sharpness of the bigot showed through,

and one bitter, acrimonious speech would often undo the work of a week.

Toward the end of May, the warm breath of spring, and more nourishing diet than her Lenten fare, restored Madame de Granville to a little strength. One morning, on coming home from mass, she sat down on a stone-bench in the little garden, where the sun's kisses reminded her of the early days of her married life, and she looked back across the years to see wherein she might have failed in her duty as a wife and mother. She was broken in upon by the Abbé Fontanon in an almost indescribable state of excitement.

"Has any misfortune befallen you, father?" she asked with filial solicitude..

"Ah! I only wish," cried the Normandy priest, "that all the woes inflicted on you by the hand of God were dealt out to me; but, my admirable friend, there are trials to which you can but bow."

"Can any worse punishments await me than those with which Providence crushes me by making my husband the instrument of His wrath?"

"You must prepare yourself, daughter, for yet worse mischief than we and your pious friends had ever conceived as possible!"

"Then I may thank God," said the countess, "for vouchsafing to use you as the messenger of His will, and thus, as ever, setting the treasures of mercy by the side of the scourges of His wrath, just as in bygone days He showed a spring to Hagar when He had driven her into the desert."

"He measures your sufferings by the strength of your resignation and the weight of your sins."

"Speak; I am ready to hear!" As she said it she cast her eyes up to heaven. "Speak, Monsieur Fontanon."

"For seven years Monsieur Granville has lived in sin with a concubine, by whom he has two children; and on this adulterous connection he has spent more than five hundred thou-

sand francs, which ought to have been the property of his legitimate family."

"I must see it to believe it!" cried the countess.

"Far be it from you!" exclaimed the abbé. "You must forgive, my daughter, and wait in patience and prayer till God enlightens your husband; unless, indeed, you choose to adopt against him the means offered you by human laws."

The long conversation that ensued between the priest and his penitent resulted in an extraordinary change in the countess; she abruptly dismissed him, called her servants, who were alarmed at her flushed face and crazy energy. She ordered her carriage—countermanded it—changed her mind twenty times in the hour; but at last, at about three o'clock, as if she had come to some great determination, she went out, leaving the whole household in amazement at such a sudden transformation.

"Is the count coming home to dinner?" she asked of his servant, to whom she would never speak.

"No, madame."

"Did you go with him to the courts this morning?"

"Yes, madame."

"And to-day is Monday?"

"Yes, madame."

"Then do the courts sit on Mondays nowadays?"

"Devil take you!" cried the man, as his mistress drove off after saying to the coachman—

"Rue Taitbout."

Mademoiselle de Bellefeuille was weeping; Roger, sitting by her side, held one of her hands between his own. He was silent, looking by turns at little Charles—who, not understanding his mother's grief, stood speechless at the sight of her tears—at the cot where Eugénie lay sleeping, and Caroline's face, on which grief had the effect of rain falling across the beams of cheerful sunshine.

“Yes, my darling,” said Roger, after a long silence, “that is the great secret: I am married. But some day I hope we may form but one family. My wife has been given over ever since last March. I do not wish her dead; still, if it should please God to take her to Himself, I believe she will be happier in paradise than in a world to whose griefs and pleasures she is equally indifferent.”

“How I hate that woman! How could she bear to make you unhappy? And yet it is to that unhappiness that I owe my happiness!”

Her tears suddenly ceased.

“Caroline, let us hope,” cried Roger. “Do not be frightened by anything that priest may have said to you. Though my wife’s confessor is a man to be feared for his power in the congregation, if he should try to blight our happiness I would find means——”

“What could you do?”

“We would go to Italy; I would fly——”

A shriek that rang out from the adjoining room made Roger start and Mademoiselle de Bellefeuille quake; but she rushed into the drawing-room, and there found Madame de Granville in a dead faint. When the countess recovered her senses, she sighed deeply on finding herself supported by the count and her rival, whom she instinctively pushed away with a gesture of contempt. Mademoiselle de Bellefeuille rose to withdraw.

“You are at home, madame,” said Granville, taking Caroline by the arm. “Stay.”

The judge took up his wife in his arms, carried her to the carriage, and got into it with her.

“Who is it that has brought you to the point of wishing me dead, of resolving to fly?” asked the countess, looking at her husband with grief mingled with indignation. “Was I not young? you thought me pretty—what fault have you to find with me? Have I been false to you? Have I not been

a virtuous and well-conducted wife? My heart has cherished no image but yours, my ears have listened to no other voice. What duty have I failed in? What have I ever denied you?"

"Happiness, madame," said the count severely. "You know, madame, that there two ways of serving God. Some Christians imagine that by going to church at fixed hours to say a Paternoster, by attending mass regularly and avoiding sin, they may win heaven—but they, madame, will go to hell; they have not loved God for Himself, they have not worshiped Him as He chooses to be worshiped, they have made no sacrifice. Though mild in seeming, they are hard on their neighbors; they see the law, the letter, not the spirit. This is how you have treated me, your earthly husband; you have sacrificed my happiness to your salvation; you were always absorbed in prayer when I came to you in gladness of heart; you wept when you should have cheered my toil; you have never tried to satisfy any demands I have made on you."

"And if they were wicked," cried the countess hotly, "was I to lose my soul to please you?"

"It is a sacrifice which another, a more loving woman, has dared to make," said Granville coldly.

"Dear God!" she cried, bursting into tears, "Thou hearest! Has he been worthy of the prayers and penance I have lived in, wearing myself out to atone for his sins and my own? Of what avail is virtue?"

"To win heaven, my dear. A woman cannot be at the same time the wife of a man and the spouse of Christ. That would be bigamy; she must choose between a husband and a nunnery. For the sake of future advantage you have stripped your soul of all the love, all the devotion, which God commands that you should have for me, you have cherished no feeling but hatred——"

"Have I not loved you?" she put in.

"No, madame."

"Then what is love?" the countess involuntarily inquired.

"Love, my dear," replied Granville, with a sort of ironical surprise, "you are incapable of understanding it. The cold sky of Normandy is not that of Spain. This difference of climate is no doubt the secret of our disaster. To yield to our caprices, to guess them, to find pleasure in pain, to sacrifice the world's opinion, your pride, your religion even, and still regard these offerings as mere grains of incense burnt in honor of the idol—that is love——"

"The love of ballet-girls!" cried the countess in horror. "Such flames cannot last, and must soon leave nothing but ashes and cinders, regret or despair. A wife, monsieur, ought, in my opinion, to bring you true friendship, equable warmth——"

"You speak of warmth as negroes speak of ice," retorted the count, with a sardonic smile. "Consider that the humblest daisy has more charms than the proudest and most gorgeous of the red hawthorns that attract us in spring by their strong scent and brilliant color. At the same time," he went on, "I will do you justice. You have kept so precisely in the straight path of imaginary duty prescribed by law that only to make you understand wherein you have failed toward me I should be obliged to enter into details which would offend your dignity, and instruct you in matters which would seem to you to undermine all morality."

"And you dare to speak of morality when you have but just left the house where you have dissipated your children's fortune in debaucheries?" cried the countess, maddened by her husband's reticence.

"There, madame, I must correct you," said the count, coolly interrupting his wife. "Though Mademoiselle de Bellefeuille is rich, it is at nobody's expense. My uncle was master of his fortune, and had several heirs. In his lifetime, and out of pure friendship, regarding her as his niece, he gave her the little estate of Bellefeuille. As for anything else, I owe it to his liberality——"

"Such conduct is only worthy of a Jacobin!" said the sanctimonious Angélique.

"Madame, you are forgetting that your own father was one of the Jacobins whom you scorn so uncharitably," said the count severely. "Citizen Bontems was signing death-warrants at a time when my uncle was doing France good service."

Madame de Granville was silenced. But after a short pause, the remembrance of what she had just seen reawakened in her soul the jealousy which nothing can kill in a woman's heart, and she murmured, as if to herself: "How can a woman thus destroy her own soul and that of others?"

"Bless me, madame," replied the count, tired of this dialogue, "you yourself may some day have to answer that question." The countess was scared. "You perhaps will be held excused by the merciful Judge, who will weigh our sins," he went on, "in consideration of the conviction with which you have worked out my misery. I do not hate you—I hate those who have perverted your heart and your reason. You have prayed for me, just as Mademoiselle de Bellefeuille has given me her heart and crowned my life with love. You should have been my mistress and the prayerful saint by turns. Do me the justice to confess that I am no reprobate, no debauchee. My life was cleanly. Alas! after seven years of wretchedness, the craving for happiness led me by an imperceptible descent to love another woman and make a second home. And do not imagine that I am singular; there are in this city thousands of husbands, all led by various causes to live this two-fold life."

"Great God!" cried the countess. "How heavy is the cross Thou hast laid on me to bear! If the husband Thou hast given me here below in Thy wrath can only be made happy through my death, take me to Thyself!"

"If you had always breathed such admirable sentiments and such devotion, we should be happy yet," said the count boldly.

"Indeed," cried Angélique, melting into a flood of tears, "forgive me if I have done any wrong. Yes, monsieur, I am ready to obey you in all things, feeling sure that you will desire nothing but what is just and natural; henceforth I will be all you can wish your wife to be."

"If your purpose, madame, is to compel me to say that I no longer love you, I shall find the cruel courage to tell you so. Can I command my heart? Can I wipe out in an instant the traces of fifteen years of suffering? I have ceased to love. These words contain a mystery as deep as lies in the words *I love*. Esteem, respect, friendship may be won, lost, regained; but as to love—I might school myself for a thousand years, and it would not blossom again, especially for a woman too old to respond to it."

"I hope, Monsieur le Comte, I sincerely hope, that such words may not be spoken to you some day by the woman you love, and in such a tone and accent——"

"Will you put on a dress in the Grecian style this evening, and come to the opera?"

The shudder with which the countess received the suggestion was a mute reply.

Early in December, 1833, a man, whose perfectly white hair and worn features seemed to show that he was aged by grief rather than by years, was walking at midnight along the Rue Gaillon. Having reached a house of modest appearance, and only two stories high, he paused to look up at one of the attic windows that pierced the roof at regular intervals. A dim light scarcely showed through the humble panes, some of which had been repaired with paper. The man below was watching the wavering glimmer with the vague curiosity of a Paris idler, when a young man came out of the house. As the light of the street lamp fell full on the face of the first comer, it will not seem surprising that, in spite of the dark-

ness, this young man went toward the passer-by, though with the hesitancy that is usual when we have any fear of making a mistake in recognizing an acquaintance.

"What, is it you," cried he, "Monsieur le Président? Alone at this hour, and so far from the Rue Saint-Lazare. Allow me to have the honor of giving you my arm. The pavement is so greasy this morning that if we do not hold each other up," he added, to soothe the elder man's susceptibilities, "we shall find it hard to escape a tumble."

"But, my dear sir, I am no more than fifty-five, unfortunately for me," replied the Comte de Granville. "A physician of your celebrity must know that at that age a man is still hale and strong."

"Then you are in waiting on a lady, I suppose," replied Horace Bianchon. "You are not, I imagine, in the habit of going about Paris on foot. When a man keeps such fine horses——"

"Still, when I am not visiting in the evening, I commonly return from the Courts or the club on foot," replied the count.

"And with large sums of money about you, perhaps!" cried the doctor. "It is a positive invitation to the assassin's knife."

"I am not afraid of that," said Granville, with melancholy indifference.

"But, at least, do not stand about," said the doctor, leading the count toward the boulevard. "A little more and I shall believe that you are bent on robbing me of your last illness, and dying by some other hand than mine."

"You caught me playing the spy," said the count. "Whether on foot or in a carriage, and at whatever hour of the night I may come by, I have for some time past observed at a window on the attic floor of your house the shadow of a person who seems to work with heroic constancy."

The count paused as if he felt some sudden pain. "And

I take as great an interest in that garret," he went on, "as a citizen of Paris must feel in the finishing of the Palais Royal."

"Well," said Horace Bianchon eagerly, "I can tell you why——"

"Tell me nothing," replied Granville, cutting the doctor short. "I would not give a centime to know whether the shadow that moves across that shabby blind is that of a man or a woman, nor whether the inhabitant of that attic is happy or miserable. Though I was surprised to see no one at work there this evening, and though I stopped to look, it was solely for the pleasure of indulging in conjectures as numerous and as idiotic as those of idlers who see a building left half finished. For nine years, my young——" the count hesitated to use a word; then he waved his hand, exclaiming: "No, I will not say friend—I hate everything that savors of sentiment. Well, for nine years past I have ceased to wonder that old men amuse themselves with growing flowers and planting trees; the events of life have taught them disbelief in all human affection; and I grew old within a few days. I will no longer attach myself to any creature but to unreasoning animals, or plants, or superficial things. I think more of Taglioni's grace than of all human feeling. I abhor life and the world in which I live alone. Nothing, nothing," he went on, in a tone that startled the younger man, "no, nothing can move or interest me."

"But you have children?"

"My children!" he repeated bitterly. "Yes—well, is not my eldest daughter the Comtesse de Vandenesse? The other will, through her sister's connections, make some good match. As to my sons, have they not succeeded? The vicomte was public prosecutor at Limoges, and is now president of the Court at Orléans; the younger is public prosecutor in Paris. My children have their own cares, their own anxieties and business to attend to. If of all those hearts one

had been devoted to me, if one had tried by entire affection to fill up the void I have here," and he struck his breast, "well, that one would have failed in life, have sacrificed it to me. And why should he? Why? To bring sunshine into my few remaining years—and would he have succeeded? Might I not have accepted such generosity as a debt? But, doctor," and the count smiled with deep irony, "it is not for nothing that we teach them arithmetic and how to count. At this moment perhaps they are waiting for my money."

"O Monsieur le Comte, how could such an idea enter your head—you who are kind, friendly, and humane! Indeed, if I were not myself a living proof of the benevolence you exercise so liberally and so nobly——"

"To please myself," replied the count. "I pay for a sensation, as I would to-morrow pay a pile of gold to recover the most childish illusion that would but make my heart glow. I help my fellow-creatures for my own sake, just as I gamble; and I look for gratitude from none. I should see you die without blinking; and I beg of you to feel the same with regard to me. I tell you, young man, the events of life have swept over my heart like the lavas of Vesuvius over Herculaneum. The town is there—dead."

"Those who have brought a soul as warm and as living as yours was to such a pitch of indifference are indeed guilty!"

"Say no more," said the count, with a shudder of aversion.

"You have a malady which you ought to allow me to treat," said Bianchon in a tone of deep emotion.

"What, do you know of a cure for death?" cried the count irritably.

"I undertake, Monsieur le Comte, to revive the heart you believe to be frozen."

"Are you a match for Talma, then?" asked the count satirically.

"No, Monsieur le Comte. But nature is as far above

Talma as Talma is superior to me. Listen; the garret you are interested in is inhabited by a woman of about thirty, and in her love is carried to fanaticism. The object of her adoration is a young man of pleasing appearance, but endowed by some malignant fairy with every conceivable vice. This fellow is a gambler, and it is hard to say which he is most addicted to—wine or women; he has, to my knowledge, committed acts deserving punishment by law. Well, and to him this unhappy woman sacrificed a life of ease, a man who worshiped her, and the father of her children. But what is wrong, Monsieur le Comte?"

"Nothing. Go on."

"She has allowed him to squander a perfect fortune; she would, I believe, give him the world if she had it; she works night and day; and many a time she has, without a murmur, seen the wretch she adores rob her even of the money saved to buy the clothes the children need, and their food for the morrow. Only three days ago she sold her hair, the finest hair I ever saw; he came in, she could not hide the gold-piece quickly enough, and he asked her for it. For a smile, for a kiss, she gave up the price of a two-week's life and peace. Is it not dreadful, and yet sublime? But work is wearing her cheeks hollow. Her children's crying has broken her heart; she is ill, and at this moment moaning on her wretched bed. This evening they had nothing to eat; the children have not strength to cry, they were silent when I went up."

Horace Bianchon stood still. Just then the Comte de Granville, in spite of himself, as it were, had put his hand into his vest pocket.

"I can guess, my young friend, how it is that she is yet alive if you attend her," said the elder man.

"O poor soul!" cried the doctor, "who could refuse to help her? I only wish I were richer, for I hope to cure her of her passion."

"But how can you expect me to pity a form of misery of which the joys to me would seem cheaply purchased with my whole fortune!" exclaimed the count, taking his hand out of his pocket empty of the bills which Bianchon had supposed his patron to be feeling for. "That woman feels, she is alive! Would not Louis XV. have given his kingdom to rise from the grave and have three days of youth and life! And is not that the history of thousands of dead men, thousands of sick men, thousands of old men?"

"Poor Caroline!" cried Bianchon.

As he heard the name the count shuddered, and grasped the doctor's arm with the grip of an iron vise, as it seemed to Bianchon.

"Her name is Caroline Crochard?" asked the president, in a voice that was evidently broken.

"Then you know her?" said the doctor, astonished.

"And the wretch's name is Solvet. Ay, you have kept your word!" exclaimed Granville; "you have roused my heart to the most terrible pain it can suffer till it is dust. That emotion, too, is a gift from hell, and I always know how to pay those debts."

By this time the count and the doctor had reached the corner of the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. One of those night-birds who wander round with a basket on their back and crook in hand, and were, during the Revolution, facetiously called the "Committee of Research," was standing by the curbstone where the two men now stopped. This scavenger had a shriveled face worthy of those immortalized by Charlet in his caricatures of the sweepers of Paris.

"Do you ever pick up a thousand-franc note?"

"Now and then, master."

"And you restore them?"

"It depends on the reward offered."

"You're the man for me," cried the count, giving the man a thousand-franc note. "Take this, but, remember, I give it

you on condition of your spending it at the tavern, of your getting drunk, fighting, beating your wife, blacking your friends' eyes. That will give work to the watch, the surgeon, the druggist—perhaps to the police, the public prosecutor, the judge, and the prison warders. Do not try to do anything else, or the devil will be revenged on you sooner or later."

A draughtsman would need at once the pencil of Charlet* and of Callot, the brush of Teniers and of Rembrandt, to give a true notion of this night-scene.

"Now I have squared accounts with hell and had some pleasure for my money," said the count in a deep voice, pointing out the indescribable physiognomy of the gaping scavenger to the doctor, who stood stupefied. "As for Caroline Crochard!—she may die of hunger and thirst, hearing the heart-rending shrieks of her starving children, and convinced of the baseness of the man she loves. I will not give a sou to rescue her; and because you have helped her, I will see you no more——"

The count left Bianchon standing like a statue, and walked as briskly as a young man to the Rue Saint-Lazare, soon reaching the little house where he resided, and where, to his very great surprise, he found a carriage waiting at the door.

"Monsieur, your son, the attorney-general, came about an hour since," said the manservant, "and is awaiting you in your bedroom."

Granville signed to the man to leave him.

"What motive can be strong enough to require you to infringe the order I have given my children never to come to me unless I send for them?" asked the count of his son as he went into the room.

"Father," replied the younger man in a tremulous voice,

* Noted for his figures of Market-women, Street Arabs, etc.

and with great respect : " I venture to hope that you will forgive me when you have heard me."

" Your reply is proper," said the count. " Sit down," and he pointed to a chair. " But whether I walk up and down, or take a seat, speak without heeding me."

" Father," the son went on, " this afternoon, at four o'clock, a very young man who was arrested in the house of a friend of mine, whom he had robbed to a considerable extent, appealed to you.

" He says he is your son."

" His name ?" asked the count hoarsely.

" Charles Crochard."*

" That will do," said the father, with an imperious wave of the hand.

Granville paced the room in solemn silence, and his son took care not to break it.

" My son," he began, and the words were pronounced in a voice so mild and fatherly that the young lawyer started : " Charles Crochard spoke the truth. I am glad you came to me to-night, my good Eugène," he added. " Here is a considerable sum of money"—and he gave him a bundle of bank-notes—" you can make any use of them you think proper in this matter. I trust you implicitly, and approve beforehand whatever arrangements you may make, either in the present or for the future. Eugène, my dear son, kiss me. We part perhaps for the last time. I shall to-morrow crave my dismissal from the King, and I am going to Italy.

" Though a father owes no account of his life to his children, he is bound to bequeath to them the experience Fate sells him so dearly—is it not a part of their inheritance ? When you marry," the count went on, with a little involuntary shiver, " do not undertake it lightly ; that act is the most important of all those which society requires of us. Remember to study at your leisure the character of the woman who

* See also " The Middle Classes."

is to be your partner ; but consult me too, I will judge of her myself. A lack of union between husband and wife, from whatever cause, leads to terrible misfortune ; sooner or later we are always punished for contravening the social law. But I will write you on this subject from Florence. A father who has the honor of presiding over a supreme court of justice must not have to blush in the presence of his son. And now, farewell."

PARIS, *February*, 1830—*January*, 1843.



THE SECRETS OF THE PRINCESS OF CADIGNAN.

TRANSLATED BY ELLEN MARRIAGE.

To Théophile Gautier.

AFTER the disasters of the Revolution of July, 1830, had wrecked the fortunes of many a noble family dependent upon the Court, Mme. la Princesse de Cadignan had the address to blame political events for the total ruin due in reality to her own extravagance. The prince had left France with the royal family, but the princess stayed on in Paris, the very fact of her husband's absence securing her from arrest. He, and he alone, was responsible for a burden of debt which could not be discharged by the sale of all his available property. The creditors had taken over the revenues of the entail, and the affairs of the great family were, in short, in as bad a way as the fortunes of the elder branch of the Bourbons. Things being thus, the Princesse de Cadignan (the lady so celebrated in her day as the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse) made up her mind to live in complete retirement, and tried to make the world forget her. And in the dizzy current of events which swept Paris away, Mme. de Maufrigneuse was soon lost to sight in the Princesse de Cadignan, and became almost a stranger to society; the new actors brought upon the stage by the Revolution of July knew nothing of the metamorphosis.

In France the title of duke takes precedence over all others, even over the title of prince; albeit it is laid down unequivocally in heraldry that titles signify absolutely nothing, and that all the nobly born are perfectly equal. This admirable theory was conscientiously put in practice in former times by

the royal house of France; indeed, it is still carried out in the letter at any rate, for kings of France are careful to give their sons the simple title of count. By virtue of the same system Francis I. signed himself "Francis, Lord of Vanves," thereby eclipsing the splendid array of titles assumed by that pompous monarch, Charles V. Louis XI. had even gone further when he gave his daughter to Pierre de Beaujeu, a simple gentleman. The feudal system was so thoroughly broken up by Louis XIV. that the title of duke in his reign became the supreme and most coveted honor.

Nevertheless, there are two or three families in France, in which the principality consists of great territorial possessions, handed down from former times, and in these it ranks above the duchy. The House of Cadignan is one of these exceptions, the eldest son is the Duc de Maufrigneuse, and the younger brothers are simply Chevaliers de Cadignan.

The Cadignans, like two princes of the House of Rohan in other times, have a right to a chair of state in their own house, and may keep a retinue of pages, gentlemen, in their service. This is a necessary piece of explanation, given partly to anticipate absurd criticism from persons who know nothing of the matter, partly too as a record of an old stately order of things in a world which is said to be passing away, an order of things which some, who understand it but little, are very eager to abolish.

The Cadignans bear *or five fusils sable conjoined in fesse*, with the motto MEMINI, and a close crown, without supporters or lambrequins. What with the prevalent ignorance of heraldry in these days, and a mighty influx of foreigners to Paris, the title of prince is beginning to enjoy a certain vogue; but it is usually only a courtesy title. There are no real princes in France save those who inherit domains with their name, and are entitled to be addressed as "Your Highness." The disdain felt for the title by the old noblesse, and the reasons which led Louis XIV. to give supremacy to the rank of duke,

prevented France from claiming the style of highness for the few princes in existence (those of Napoleon's creation excepted). This is how the Princes de Cadignan came to rank nominally below other princes on the continent of Europe.

The persons known collectively as the Faubourg Saint-Germain protected the princess; treating her with a respectful discretion due to a name that will always be honored, to misfortunes which no longer gave rise to talk, and to Mme. de Cadignan's beauty, which was all that remained of her faded glories. The world that she had adorned gave her credit for thus taking the veil, as it were, and entering the cloister in her own house. For her, of all women, such a piece of good taste involved an immense sacrifice; and in France anything great is always so keenly appreciated that the princess' retreat gained for her all the ground that she had lost in public opinion while her splendor was at its height. Of her old friends among women, she only saw the Marquise d'Espard; and as yet she was never seen in public on great occasions, or at evening parties. The princess and the marquise called upon one another, very early in the morning, and, as it were, in secret; and when the princess dined with her friend, the marquise closed her doors to every one else.

Mme. d'Espard's behavior was admirable. She changed her box at the Italiens, coming down from the first tier to a *baignoire** on the first floor, so that Mme. de Cadignan could come and depart without being seen. Not every woman would have been capable of a piece of delicacy which deprived her of the pleasure of dragging a former and fallen rival in her train, and posing as her benefactress. Thus enabled to dispense with ruinous toilettes, the princess went privately in the marquise's carriage, which in public she would have refused to take. Nobody ever knew why Mme. d'Espard behaved in this way; but her conduct was sublime, involving a whole host of the little sacrifices which seem mere trifles in them-

* Lit.: bath-tub, alluding to the circumscribed box.

selves, but taken as a whole reach giant's proportions. In 1832 the snows of three years had covered the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse's adventures, whitening them so effectually that nothing short of a prodigious effort of memory could recall the heavy indictments formerly laid to her charge. Of the queen adored by so many courtiers, of the duchess whose levities might furnish a novelist with several volumes, there now remained an exquisitely fair woman of thirty-six, who might have passed for thirty in spite of her nineteen-year-old son.

Georges, Duc de Maufrigneuse, beautiful as Antinous, and poor as Job, was certain of a great career; and his mother's first wish was to see him married to a great fortune. Perhaps she meant to choose an heiress for him some day out of Mme. d'Espard's salon, which was supposed to be the first in Paris; perhaps this was the real reason of her intimacy with the marquise. The princess, looking forward, saw another five years of retirement before her; five desolate, lonely years; but if Georges was to marry well, her conduct must receive the hallmark of virtue.

The princess lived in a modest first-floor flat in a mansion in the Rue de Miromesnil, where relics of bygone splendor had been turned to account. A great lady's elegance still pervaded everything. She had surrounded herself with beautiful things, which told their own story of a life in high spheres. The magnificent miniature of Charles X. above her chimney-piece was painted by Mme. de Mirbel, and bore the legend, "Given by the King," engraved on the frame. The companion picture was a portrait of MADAME, who had been so peculiarly gracious to her. The album that shone conspicuous on one of the tables was an almost priceless treasure, which none of the bourgeoisies that rule our modern money-making and censorious society would dare to exhibit in public. It was a piece of audacity that paints the princess' character to admiration. The album was full of portraits, some thirty among them belonging to intimate friends—lovers, the world

said. As to numbers, this was a slander ; but with regard to some ten of them perhaps, as the Marquise d'Espard said, there was a good, broad foundation for the calumny. However that might be, Maxime de Trailles, de Marsay, Rastignac, the Marquis d'Esgrignon, General de Montriveau, the Marquises de Ronquerolles and d'Ajuda-Pinto, Prince Galathionne, the young Duc de Grandlieu, the young Duc de Rhétoré, the young Vicomte de Sérizy, and Lucien de Rubempré's beautiful face, had all received most flattering treatment from the brushes of the famous portrait-painters of the day. At this time the princess only received two or three of the originals of the portraits, and pleasantly called the book "My Collection of Errors."

Adversity had made a good mother of Mme. la Princesse. Her amusements during the first fifteen years of the Restoration had left her little time to think of her son ; but now, when she took refuge in obscurity, this illustrious egoist be-thought herself that maternal sentiment pushed to an extreme would win absolution for her. Her past life would be condoned by sentimental people, who will pardon anything to a fond mother, and she loved her son so much the better because she had nothing else left to love. Georges de Maufrigneuse was, for that matter, a son of whom any mother might have been proud. And the princess had made all kinds of sacrifices for him. Georges had a stable and coach-house, and inhabited three daintily furnished rooms in the entresol above, which gave upon the street.

His mother stinted herself to keep a horse for him to ride, a cab-horse, and a diminutive servant. The duke's tiger had a hard time of it ! "Toby," once in the service of "the late Beaudenord"—for in this jocular manner young men of fashion were wont to allude to that ruined dandy—Toby, to repeat, now turned twenty-five years of age, and still supposed to be fourteen, must groom the horses, clean the cab or the tilbury, go out with his master, keep his rooms in order, and

be on hand in the princess' antechamber to admit visitors, if by any chance a visitor called on her.

When you considered the part that the beautiful Duchesse de Maufrigneuse had played under the Restoration ; how she had been one of the queens of Paris, a radiant queen, leading a life so luxurious that even the wealthiest women of fashion in London might have taken lessons of her ; it was something indescribably touching to see her in that mere nutshell of a place in the Rue de Miromesnil, only a few doors away from the huge Hôtel de Cadignan, which nobody was rich enough to live in, so that the speculative builder's hammer brought it down. The woman for whom thirty servants were scarce sufficient, the mistress of the finest salons and the prettiest little apartments in which she entertained so splendidly, was now living in a suite of five rooms—an antechamber, a dining-room, a drawing-room, a bedroom, and dressing-room—with a couple of women-servants for her whole establishment.

“Ah ! she is an admirable mother,” that shrewd woman the Marquise d’Espard would remark, “and admirable without overdoing it. She is happy. Nobody would have believed that such a frivolous woman would be capable of taking a resolution and following it up so persistently as she does. And our good archbishop has encouraged her, he is goodness itself to her, he has just persuaded the dowager Comtesse de Cinq-Cygne to call upon her.”

In any case, let us own that no one but a queen can abdicate, and descend nobly from the lofty elevation which is never utterly lost to her. It is only those who are conscious that they are nothing in themselves that will waste regrets on their decline, and pity themselves, and turn to a past that will never return for them. They know instinctively that success will not come twice. The princess was forced to do without the rare flowers with which she had been wont to surround herself, a setting that enhanced her beauty, for no one could fail to compare her to a flower. Wherefore she had chosen

her first-floor flat with care, so as to enjoy a pretty little garden with flowering trees and a green grass-plot to brighten her quiet rooms all through the year.

Her annual income possibly amounted to twelve thousand francs or thereabouts, but even that modest sum was made up partly by an allowance from the old Duchesse de Navarreins (the young duke's paternal aunt), partly by contributions from the Duchesse d'Uxelles, who was living on her estate in the country, and saving as none but dowager-duchesses can save; Harpagon was a mere tiro in comparison.

The Prince de Cadignan lived abroad, always at the orders of his exiled masters. He shared their adversity, serving them with devotion as disinterested and, perhaps, rather more intelligent than that of most other adherents of fallen royalty. His position was even now a protection to his wife in Paris. In such obscurity did the princess live, and so little did her destitution arouse the suspicions of the Government, that a certain marshal, to whom France owes an African province, used to meet Legitimist leaders at her house and hold counsel with them while MADAME was making the attempt in La Vendée.

Foreseeing the approaching bankruptcy of love, and the drawing nigh of that fortieth year beyond which there lies so little for a woman, the princess launched forth into the realms of politics and philosophy. She took to reading!—she who for the last sixteen years had shown the utmost abhorrence of anything serious! Literature and politics to-day take the place of devoutness as the last refuge of feminine affectation. It was said in fashionable circles that Diane meant to write a book. During this transition period, when the beautiful woman of other days was preparing to fade into a woman of intellect, until such time as she should fade away for good, Diane made of the reception at her house a privilege in the highest degree flattering to the persons thus favored. Under cover of these occupations she contrived to hoodwink

de Marsay, one of her early lovers, and now the most influential member of the Government of the Citizen King. Several times she received visits from the prime minister in the evening while the Legitimist leaders and the marshal were actually assembled in her bedroom, discussing plans for winning back the kingdom, and forgetting in their deliberations that the kingdom was not to be won without the help of ideas—the one means of success overlooked by them. It was a pretty woman's revenge thus to inveigle a prime minister and use him as a screen for a conspiracy against his own government; the princess wrote MADAME the sprightliest account of an adventure worthy of the best days of the Fronde.

The young Duc de Maufrigneuse went to La Vendée, and contrived to come back again quietly and without committing himself, but not until he had shared MADAME's perils. When all seemed lost, MADAME sent him back, unfortunately perhaps, for a young man's impassioned vigilance might possibly have foiled treachery.

Great as Mme. de Maufrigneuse's transgressions might have been in the eyes of the middle-class matron, her son's behavior blotted them all out for the aristocratic world. It was something great and noble surely to risk the life of an only son and the heir to a historic name in this way. There are persons, reputed clever, who redeem the faults of private life by political services, and *vice versa*. But the Princesse de Cadignan had acted without calculation of any kind. Perhaps there is never calculation on the part of those who so conduct their lives; and circumstances account for a good half of many seeming inconsistencies.

On one of the first fine days in May, 1833, the Marquise d'Espard and the princess were taking a turn, they could scarcely be said to be taking a walk, along the one garden path beside the grass-plot. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, the sun was taking leave of the garden for the day,

but the air was warm with heat reflected from the walls, and the air was full of the scent of flowers brought by the marquise.

"We shall lose de Marsay soon," Mme. d'Espard was saying, "and with him goes your last hope of fortune for the Duc de Maufrigneuse; since you played such a successful trick on that great politician his affection for you has very sensibly increased."

"My son shall never come to terms with the younger branch, even if he must starve first and I should have to work for him," returned the princess. "But Berthe de Cinq-Cygne has no aversion for him."

"The younger generation is not bound in the same way as the older——"

"Let us say nothing about that. If I fail to tame the Marquise de Cinq-Cygne, it will be quite bad enough to be forced to marry my son to some blacksmith's daughter, as young d'Esgrignon did."

"Did you love him?" asked the marquise.

"No," the princess answered gravely, "d'Esgrignon's naïveté was only a kind of provincial's callowness, as I found out a little too late, or too soon, if you prefer it."

"And de Marsay?"

"De Marsay played with me as if I were a doll. I was almost a girl. We never love the men who take the office of tutor upon themselves; they grate overmuch on our little susceptibilities."

"And that wretched boy who hanged himself?"

"Lucien? An Antinous and a great poet. I worshiped him in all conscience, and I might have been happy. But he was in love with a girl of the town; and I gave him up to Mme. de Sérizy. If he had cared to love me, should I have given him up?"

"What an odd thing, that you should come into collision with an Esther!"

"She was handsomer than I," said the princess. "Very soon I shall have spent three years in complete solitude," she went on after a pause. "Well, there has been nothing painful in the quiet. To you, and you only, I will venture to say that I have been happy. Adoration palled upon me; I was jaded without enjoyment; the surface impressions never went deeper into my heart. All the men that I had known were petty, mean, and superficial, I thought; not one of them did anything in the least unexpected; they had neither innocence, nor greatness, nor delicacy. I should have liked to find some one of whom I could stand in awe."

"Then, is it with you as it is with me, my dear?" responded the marquise. "Have you tried to love and never found love?"

"Never," broke in the princess, laying a hand on her friend's arm. The two women went across to a rustic bench under a mass of jessamine now flowering for the second time. Both had spoken words full of solemn import for women at their age.

"Like you," resumed the princess, "I have been more loved, perhaps, than other women; but, through so many adventures, I feel that I have never known happiness. I have done many reckless things, but always with an end in view, and that end receded as I advanced. My heart has grown old with an innocence unfathomed. Yes, a credulous first-love lies unawakened beneath all the experience; and I feel, too, that I am young and fair, in spite of so much weariness, so many blighting influences. We may love, yet not be happy; we may be happy when we do not love; but to love and to be happy both, to know the two boundless joys of human experience—this is a miracle, and the miracle has not been worked for me."

"Nor for me," said Mme. d'Espard.

"A dreadful regret haunts me in my retreat; I have found pastimes, but I have not loved."

"What an incredible secret!"

"Ah! my dear, these are secrets that we can only confide to each other; nobody in Paris would believe us."

"And if we had not both passed our thirty-sixth year, perhaps we might not make these admissions."

"No. While we are young, we are stupidly fatuous on some points," assented the princess. "Sometimes we behave like the poverty-stricken youths that play with a toothpick to make others believe that they have dined well."

"After all, here we are," Mme. d'Espard said with bewitching grace and a charming gesture as of innocence grown wise; "here we are, and there is still enough life in us, it seems to me, for a return game."

"When you told me the other day that Beatrix had gone off with Conti,* I thought about it all night long," said the princess, after a pause. "A woman must be very happy indeed to sacrifice her position and her future, and to give up the world for ever like that."

"She is a little fool," Mme. d'Espard returned gravely. "Mademoiselle des Touches was only too delighted to be rid of Conti. Beatrix could not see that it was a strong proof that there was nothing in Conti when a clever woman gave him up without making a defense of her so-called happiness for a single moment."

"Then is she going to be unhappy?"

"She is unhappy now. What was the good of leaving her husband? What is it but an admission of weakness in a wife?"

"Then, do you think that Madame de Rochefide's motive was not a desire to experience a complete love, that bliss of loving and being loved which for us both is still a dream?"

"No. She aped Madame de Beauséant and Madame de Langeais, who, between ourselves, would have been as great figures as La Vallière, or the Montespan, or Diane de Poitiers,

* See "Beatrix."

or the Duchesses d'Étampes or de Chateauroux, in any age less commonplace than ours."

"Oh, with the King omitted, yes, my dear. Ah! if I could only call up those women, and ask them if——"

"But there is no necessity to call up the dead," broke in the marquise; "we know living women who are happy. A score of times I have begun intimate talk about this kind of thing with the Comtesse de Montcornet. For fifteen years she has been the happiest woman under the sun with that little Émile Blondet. Not an infidelity, not a thought from another; they are still as they were at the first. But somebody always comes to disturb us at the most interesting point. Then there is Rastignac and Madame de Nucingen, and your cousin Madame de Camps and that Octave of hers; there is a secret in these long attachments; they know something, dear, that we neither of us know. The world does us the exceeding honor to take us for *rouées* worthy of the Court of the Regency, and we are as innocent as two little boarding-school misses."

"I should be glad to have even that innocence," the princess exclaimed mockingly; "ours is worse; there is something humiliating in it. There is no help for it! We will offer up the mortification to God in expiation of our fruitless quest of love; for it is scarcely likely, dear, that in our Saint-Martin's* summer we shall find the glorious flower that did not bloom for us in May and June."

"That is not the question," rejoined the marquise after a pause, filled by a meditative retrospect. "We are still handsome enough to inspire love, but we shall never convince any one of our innocence and virtue."

"If it were a falsehood, it should soon be garnished with commentaries, served up with the pretty art that makes a lie credible, and swallowed down like delicious fruit. But to make a truth credible! Ah! the greatest men have perished

* Anglice: St. Luke's Little Summer, also Indian Summer.

in that attempt," added the princess, with a subtle smile that Lionardo's brush alone could render.

"Fools can sometimes love," said the marquise.

"Yes; but not even fools are simple enough to believe this," pointed out the princess.

"You are right," the marquise said, laughing. "We ought not to look to a fool or a man of talent for the solution of the problem. There is nothing for it but genius. In genius alone do you find a child's trustfulness, the religion of love, and a willingness to be blindfolded. Look at Canalis and the Duchesse de Chaulieu. If you and I ever came across men of genius, they were too remote from our lives and too busy; we were too frivolous, too much carried away and taken up with other things."

"Ah! and yet I should not like to leave this world without knowing the joy of love to the full," exclaimed the princess.

"It is nothing to inspire love," said Mme. d'Espard; "it is a question of feeling it. I see many women that are only pegs on which to hang a passion, and not at once its cause and effect."

"The last passion that I inspired was something sacred and noble," said the princess; "a future lay before it. Chance, for this once, sent me the man of genius, our due; the due so difficult to come by, for there are more pretty women than men of genius. But the devil was in it."

"Do tell me about it, dear; this is quite new to me."

"I only discovered his romantic passion in the winter of 1829. Every Friday at the opera I used to see a man of thirty or thereabouts sitting in the same place in the orchestra; he used to look at me with eyes of fire, saddened at times by the thought of the distance between us and the impossibility of success."

"Poor fellow, we grow very stupid when we are in love," said the marquise. The princess smiled at the friendly epigram.

"He used to slip out into the corridor between the acts," she went on. "Once or twice, to see me or to be seen, he pressed his face against the pane of glass in the next box. If people came to my box, I used to see him glued in the doorway to steal a glance. He knew every one in my set by sight at last. He used to follow them to my box, for the sake of having the door left ajar. Poor fellow, he must have found out whom I was very soon, for he knew de Maufrigneuse and my father-in-law by sight. Afterward I used to see my mysterious stranger at the Italiens, sitting in a stall just opposite, so that he could look up at me in unfeigned ecstasy. It was pretty to see it. After the opera or the Bouffons, I used to see him planted on his two feet in the crush. People elbowed him, he stood firm. The light died out of his eyes when he saw me leaning on the arm of some one in favor. As for anything else, not a word, not a letter, not a sign. This was in good taste, you must admit. Sometimes in the morning, when I came back to my house, I would find him again, sitting on a stone by the gateway. This love-stricken man had very fine eyes, a long, thick fan-shaped beard, a royale, and a mustache and whiskers; you could see nothing of his face but the pale skin over the cheek-bones and a noble forehead. It was a truly antique head.

"The prince, as you know," she continued, "defended the Tuileries on the side of the quais in July. He came to Saint-Cloud the evening that all was lost. 'I was all but killed, dear, at four o'clock,' he said. 'One of the insurgents had leveled his gun at me, when the leader of the attack, a young man with a long beard whom I have seen at the Italiens, I think, struck down the barrel.' The shot hit somebody else, a quartermaster, I believe, two paces away from my husband. So it was plain that the young fellow was a Republican.

"In 1831 when I came to live here I saw him leaning against the house-wall. He seemed to rejoice over my calamities; perhaps he thought that they brought us nearer together.

But I never saw him again after the Saint-Merri affair ; he was killed that day. The day before General Lamarque's funeral I walked out with my son, and our Republican went with us, sometimes behind, sometimes in front, from the Madeleine to the Passage des Panoramas where I was going."

"Is that all?" asked the marquise.

"All," returned the princess. "Oh, yes; the morning after Saint-Merri was taken a boy out of the street came and must speak to me; he gave me a letter written on cheap paper, and signed with the stranger's name."

"Let me see it," said the marquise.

"No, dear. The love in that man's heart was something so great and sacred that I cannot betray his confidence. It stirs my heart to think of that short terrible letter, and the dead writer moves me more than any of the living men that I have singled out. He haunts me."

"Tell me his name?"

"Oh, quite a common one—Michel Chrestien."

"You did well to tell me of it," Mme. d'Espard answered quickly; "I have often heard of him. Michel Christien was a friend of a well-known writer whom you have already wished to see—that Daniel d'Arthez who comes to my house once or twice in a winter. This Christien, who died, as a matter of fact, at Saint-Merri, did not lack friends. I have heard it said that he was one of those great politicians who, like de Marsay, need nothing but a turn of the wheel of chance to be on a sudden all that they ought to be."

"Then it is better that he should be dead," said the princess, hiding her thoughts beneath a melancholy expression.

"Do you care to meet d'Arthez some evening at my house?" asked the marquise. "You could talk with him of your ghost."

"Very willingly, dear."

Some days after this conversation, Blondet and Rastignac, knowing d'Arthez, promised Mme. d'Espard that he should

dine with her. The promise would scarcely have been prudent if the princess' name had not been mentioned, but the great man of letters could not be indifferent to the opportunity of an introduction to her.

Daniel d'Arthez is one of the very few men of our day who combine great gifts with a great nature. He had at this time won, not all the popularity that his work deserved, but a respectful esteem to which the chosen few could add nothing. His reputation certainly would increase, but in the eyes of connoisseurs he had practically reached his full development. Some writers find their true level soon or late, and once for all, and d'Arthez was one of them. Poor, and of good family, he had rightly guessed the spirit of the age, and trusted not to his ancestor's name, but the name won by himself. For many years he fought his battle in the arena of Paris, to the annoyance of a rich uncle, who left the obscure writer to languish in the direst poverty. Afterward, when his nephew became famous, he left him all his money, a piece of inconsistency to be laid to the score of vanity. The sudden transition from poverty to wealth made no change whatever in Daniel d'Arthez's way of life. He continued his work with simplicity worthy of ancient times, and laid new burdens upon himself by accepting a seat in the Chamber of Deputies, on the benches to the Right.

Since his name became known in the world he had occasionally gone into society. An old friend of his, the great doctor Horace Bianchon, had introduced him to the Baron de Rastignac, an under-secretary of State, and a friend of de Marsay's. These were the two politicians who nobly enough gave Michel Chrestien's friends permission to look for his dead body in the cloisters of Saint-Merri, and to bury the Republican with due honors. Gratitude for a service which contrasted strongly with the rigor used by the administration at a time when party spirit ran so high formed a bond, as it were,

between d'Arthez and Rastignac, a bond which the under-secretary of State and the illustrious minister were too adroit not to turn to account. Several of Michel Chrestien's friends held opposite opinions in politics; these had been won over and attached to the new government. One of them, Léon Giraud, first received the appointment of master of requests, and afterward became a councilor of State.

Daniel d'Arthez's life was entirely devoted to his work. He saw society by glimpses only; it was a sort of dream for him. His house was a convent. He led the life of a Benedictine, with a Benedictine's sober rule, a Benedictine's regularity of occupation. His friends knew that he had always dreaded the accident of a woman's entry into his life, he had studied woman too well not to fear her; and by dint of much study he knew less of his subject, much as your profound tactician is always beaten under unforeseen conditions when scientific axioms will not apply. He turned the face of an experienced observer upon the world while he was still at heart a completely unsophisticated boy. The seeming paradox is quite intelligible to any one who can appreciate the immense distance set between faculties and sentiments—for the former proceed from the brain, the latter from the heart. A man may be great and yet be a villain, and a fool may rise to sublime heights of love. D'Arthez was one of the richly endowed beings in whom a keen brain and a wide range of intellectual gifts have not excluded a capacity for deep and noble feeling. By a rare privilege he was both a doer and a thinker. His private life was noble and pure. Carefully as he had shunned love hitherto, he was learned in love; he knew beforehand how great an ascendancy passion would gain over him. But poverty and cold, and the heavy strain of the preparation of the solid groundwork of his brilliant after-achievements, had acted marvelously as a preservative. Then his circumstances grew easier, and he formed a commonplace and utterly incomprehensible connection; the

woman certainly was good-looking enough, but without manners or education, and socially his inferior. She was kept carefully out of sight.

Michel Chrestien maintained that men of genius possess the power of transforming the most massive women into sylphs; for them the silliest of the sex have sense and wit, and the peasant-girl is a marquise; the more accomplished the woman, the more (according to Chrestien) she loses in their eyes, because she leaves less to the imagination. He also held that love (a purely physical craving for lower natures) becomes, for the higher, the greatest achievement of the soul of man; the closest and strongest of all ties that bind two human creatures to each other. By way of justifying d'Arthez, he instanced Raphael and the Fornarina. (He might have taken himself as a model in that kind, since he saw an angel in the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse.) But d'Arthez's strange fancy was explicable in many ways. Perhaps at the outset he lost all hope of finding a woman to correspond to the exquisite visionary ideal, the fond dream of every intelligent man; perhaps his heart was too fastidiously sensitive, too delicate to surrender to a woman of the world; perhaps he preferred to do as nature bade while keeping his illusions and cultivating his ideal; or had he put love far from him as something incompatible with work, with the regularity of a cloistered life, in which passion might have worked confusion?

For some months past Blondet and Rastignac had rallied him on this score, reproaching him with knowing nothing of the world nor of women. To hear them talk, his works were numerous enough and advanced enough to permit of some diversion; he had a fine fortune, yet he lived like a student; he had had no pleasure from his fame or his wealth; he knew nothing of the exquisite delights of the noble and delicate passion that a high-born, high-bred woman can inspire and feel. Was it not unworthy in him to know love only in its

gross material aspects? Love reduced to the thing that nature made it was, in their eyes, the most besotted folly. It was the glory of civilization that it had created Woman, when nature stopped short at the female; nature cared for nothing but the perpetuation of the species, whereas civilization invented the perpetuation of desire; and, in short, discovered love, the fairest of man's religions. D'Arthez knew nothing of charming subtleties of language; nothing of proofs of affection continually given by the brain and soul; nothing of desire ennobled by expression; nothing of the divine form that a high-bred woman lends to the grossest materialism. D'Arthez might know women, but he knew nothing of the divinity. A prodigious deal of art, a fair presentment of body and soul, was indispensable in a woman, if love was worthy to be called love. In short, the tempters vaunted that delicious corruption of the imagination which constitutes a Parisienne's coquetry; they pitied d'Arthez because he lived on plain and wholesome fare, and had not tasted luxuries prepared with the Parisienne's skill in these high culinary arts, and whetted his curiosity. At length Dr. Bianchon, recipient of d'Arthez's confidences, knew that this curiosity was aroused. The connection formed by the great man of letters with a commonplace woman, far from growing more agreeable with use and wont, had become intolerable to him; but the excessive shyness that seizes upon solitary men was holding him back.

"What?" said Rastignac, "when a man bears per bend *gules* and *or*, a besant and a torteau counterchanged, why does he not allow the old Picard escutcheon to shine on his carriage? You have thirty thousand livres a year and all that you make by your pen; you have made good your motto—*ARS THESAURUSQUE VIRTUS**—yet you will not air it in the Bois de Boulogne! Good qualities ought not to hide themselves in this age."

"If you read your work over to that fat Laforêt-like creature

* A punning motto: these were once very popular.

who solaces your existence, I would forgive you for keeping her," put in Blondet. "But, my dear fellow, if you live on dry bread, materially speaking, mentally you have not so much as a crust."

These friendly skirmishes between Daniel and his friends had been going on for some months before Mme. d'Espard asked Rastignac and Blondet to induce d'Arthez to dine with her, saying as she did so that the Princesse de Cadignan was extremely anxious to make the famous writer's acquaintance. There are women for whom curiosities of this kind have all the attraction that magic-lantern pictures possess for children; but the pleasure for the eyes is poor enough at the best, and fraught with disenchantment. The more interesting a clever man seems at a distance, the less he answers expectations on a nearer view; the more brilliant he was imagined to be, the duller the figure that he subsequently cuts. And it may be added, parenthetically, that disappointed curiosity is apt to be unjust. D'Arthez was not to be deluded by Rastignac or Blondet, but they told him laughingly that here was a most alluring opportunity of rubbing the rust off his heart, of discovering something of the supreme felicity to be gained through the love of a Parisian great lady. The princess was positively smitten with him; there was nothing to fear; he had everything to gain from the interview; he could not possibly descend from the pedestal on which Mme. de Cadignan had placed him. Neither Blondet nor Rastignac saw any harm in crediting the princess with this love-affair; her past had furnished so many anecdotes that she could surely bear the weight of the slander. For d'Arthez's benefit, they proceeded to relate the adventures of the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse. Beginning with her grace's first flirtations with de Marsay, they told of her subsequent escapades with d'Ajudapinto (whom she took from his wife, and so avenged Mme. de Beauséant); and of her third *liaison* with young d'Esgrig-

non, who went with her to Italy, and got himself into an ugly scrape on her account. Then they told how wretched a certain well-known ambassador had made her; how happy she had been with a Russian general; how she had acted since then as Egeria to two ministers of Foreign Affairs, and so forth, and so forth. D'Arthez told them that he had heard more about her than they could tell him; their poor friend Michel Chrestien had worshiped her in his secret heart for four years, and all but lost his wits for her.

"I often used to go with him to the Italiens or the opera," Daniel said. "He and I used to rush along the streets to keep up with her horses, while he gazed at the princess through the windows of her brougham. The Prince de Cadignan owed his life to that love-affair; a street-boy was going to fire at him when Michel stopped him."

"Well, well, you will find a subject ready made," smiled Blondet. "Just the woman you want; she will only be cruel through delicacy; she will initiate you into the mysteries of refined luxury in the most gracious way; but take care! She has run through many a fortune. The fair Diane is a spendthrift of the order that costs not a centime, but for whom men spend millions. Give yourself body and soul if you will, but keep a hold of your purse, like the old man in Girodet's picture of the Deluge."

This conversation invested the princess with the grace of a queen, the corruption of a diplomatist, the mystery of an initiation, the depth of an abyss, and the danger of a siren. D'Arthez's ingenious friends, being quite unable to foresee the results of their hoax, ended by making Diane d'Uxelles the most portentous Parisienne, the cleverest coquette, the most bewildering courtesan in the world. They were right; and yet the woman so lightly spoken of was sacred and divine for d'Arthez. There was no need to work upon his curiosity. He agreed to meet her at the first asking, and that was all his friends wanted of him.

Mme. d'Espard went to the princess as soon as the invitation was accepted.

"Do you feel that you are in good looks and good form for coquetry, dear?" she asked. "Come and dine with me in a few days' time, and I will serve you up d'Arthez. Our man of genius is the shyest of the shy; he is afraid of women; he has never been in love. Here is a subject for you. He is extremely clever, and so simple that he disarms suspicion and puts you at a disadvantage. His perspicacity is altogether of the retrospective kind; it acts after the event, and throws out all your calculations. You may take him in to-day; to-morrow he is not to be duped by anything."

"Ah! if I were only thirty years old, I would have some fun," said the princess. "The one thing wanting in my life hitherto has been a man of genius to outwit. I have always had partners, never an adversary. Love was a game, not a contest."

"Admit that I am very generous, dear princess; for, after all, well-regulated charity——"

The women looked laughingly into each other's faces, and their hands met with a friendly pressure. Surely both of them must have been in possession of important secrets! They certainly did not take account of a man or a service to render; and any sincere and lasting friendship between two women is sure to be cemented by petty crimes. You may see two of these dear friends, each of them quite able to kill the other with the poisoned dagger in her hand; and a touching picture of harmony they present—till the moment comes when one of them chances to let her weapon drop.

In a week's time, therefore, the marquise gave one of her small evening parties, her *petits jours* (little days), when a few intimate friends were invited by word of mouth, and the hostess shut her door to other visitors. Five people were asked to dinner: Émile Blondet and Mme. de Montcornet, Daniel d'Arthez, Rastignac, and the Princesse de Cadignan—three

men and, including the mistress of the house, three women. Never did chance permit of more skillful prearrangement than on this occasion of d'Arthez's introduction to Mme. de Cadignan.

Even at this day the princess is supposed to be one of the best-dressed women in Paris, and for women dress is the first of arts. She wore a blue velvet gown with large white hanging sleeves. The corselet-bodice was cut low at the throat ; but a sort of chemisette of slightly drawn tulle with a blue border—such as you may see in some of Raphael's portraits—covered her shoulders, leaving only about four fingers' breadth of her neck quite bare. A few sprays of white heather, cleverly arranged by her maid, adorned the fair, rippling hair for which Diane had been famous. In truth, at this moment she looked scarcely five-and-twenty. Four years of solitude and repose had restored brilliancy to her complexion ; and there are moments, surely, when a woman looks more beautiful for the desire to please ; the will counts for something in the changes that pass over a face. If persons of sanguine or melancholic temperament turn sallow and the lymphatic grow livid under the influence of violent emotion, surely it must be conceded that desire and hope and joy are great beautifiers of the complexion ; they glow in brilliant light from the eyes, kindling beauty in a face with a fresh brightness like that of a sunny morning. The white fairness for which the princess was so famous had taken on the rich coloring of mature and majestic womanhood. At this period of her life, reflection and serious thought had left their impression upon her ; the dreamy, very noble forehead seemed wonderfully in harmony with the slow queenly gaze of her blue eyes. No physiognomist, however skilled, could have imagined that calculation and decision lay beneath those preternaturally delicate features. Some women's faces baffle science by their repose and fineness, and leave observation at fault ; the opportunity of studying them while the passions speak is hard to come by ; when the

passions have spoken it is too late ; by that time a woman is old, she does not care to dissimulate.

The princess was just such an inscrutable feminine mystery. Whatever she chose to be she could be. She was playful, childlike, distractingly innocent ; or subtle, serious, and disquietingly profound. When she came to the marquise's she meant to be a simple, sweet woman, who had known life only by its deceptions ; a soulful, much-slandered, but resigned victim, a cruelly-used angel, in short.

She came early, so as to take her place beside Mme. d'Espard on the settee by the fireside. She would be seen as she meant to be seen ; she would arrange her attitude with an art concealed by an exquisite ease ; her pose should be of the elaborated and studied kind which brings out all the beauty of the curving line that begins at the foot, rises gracefully to the hips, and continues through wonderful sinuous contours to the shoulder, outlining the whole length of the body. Nudity would be less dangerous than draperies so artfully arranged to cover yet reveal every line. With a subtlety beyond the reach of many women, Diane had brought her son with her. For a moment Mme. d'Espard beheld the Duc de Maufrigneuse with blank amazement, then her eyes showed that she comprehended the situation. She grasped the princess' hand with, "I understand ! D'Arthez is to be made to accept all the difficulties at the outset, so that you will have nothing to overcome afterward."

The Comtesse de Montcornet came with Blondet, Rastignac brought d'Arthez. The princess paid the great man none of the compliments with which ordinary people are lavish on such occasions ; but in her advances there was a certain graciousness and deference which could scarcely have been exceeded for any one. Just so, no doubt, she had been with the King of France and the princes. She seemed pleased to see the great man of letters, and glad to have sought him out. People of taste (and the princess' taste was excellent) are

known by their manner as listeners; by an unfeigned interest and urbanity, which is to politeness what practice is to good doctrine. Her attentive way of listening when d'Arthez spoke was a thousand times more flattering than the most highly seasoned compliments. The introduction was made by the marquise quite simply, and with regard to the dues of either.

At dinner, so far from adopting the affectations which some women permit themselves with regard to food, the princess ate with a very good appetite; she made a point of allowing the natural woman to appear without airs of any kind. D'Arthez sat next to her, and between the courses she entered upon a *tête-à-tête* with him under cover of the general conversation.

"My reason for procuring myself the pleasure of a meeting with you, monsieur," she said, "was a wish to hear something of an unfortunate friend of yours who died for a cause other than ours. I lay under great obligations to him, but it was out of my power to acknowledge or to requite his services. The Prince de Cadignan shares my regrets. I have heard that you were one of the poor fellow's most intimate friends, and that disinterested stanch friendship between you gives me a certain claim to your acquaintance; so you will not think it strange that I should wish to hear all that you could tell me of one so dear to you. I am attached to the exiled family, and of course hold monarchical opinions; but I am not of the number of those who think that it is impossible for a Republican to be noble at heart. A monarchy and a republic are the only forms of government which do not stifle nobility of sentiment."

"Michel Chrestien was sublime, madame," Daniel answered with an unsteady voice. "I do not know of a greater man among the heroes of old times. You must not think that he was one of the narrow Republicans who want the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety reëstablished with its pretty ways. No, Michel used to dream of European Federa-

tion on the Swiss model. Set aside the magnificent monarchical system which, in my opinion, is peculiarly suited to our country; and let us admit that Michel's project would mean the abolition of war in the old world, and a Europe constituted afresh on a very different basis from that of ancient conquest, modified subsequently by the feudal system. On this showing the Republicans most nearly approached his theories; and for that reason he fought with them in July and at Saint-Merri. In politics we were diametrically opposed, but none the less we were the closest friends."

"It is the finest possible testimony to both your characters," Mme. de Cadignan said timidly.

"During the last four years of his life he told me of his love for you. No one else knew about it," continued d'Arthez. "We had been like brothers; but that confidence bound us to each other even more closely than before. He alone, madame, would have loved you as you deserve to be loved. Many a wetting I have had, as he and I accompanied your carriage home, running to keep up with the horses, so as not to miss a glimpse of your face—to admire you——"

"Why, monsieur, I shall soon be bound to make compensation——"

"Why is not Michel here?" returned Daniel in a melancholy voice.

"Perhaps he might not have loved me for long," began the princess with a sorrowful shake of the head. "Republicans are even more absolute in their ideas than we Absolutists who sin through indulgence. He would dream of me as a perfect woman, no doubt; he would have been cruelly undeceived. We women are persecuted with slander; and, unlike you literary men, we cannot meet calumny and fight it down by our fame and our achievements. People take us, not for the women we are, but simply as others make us out to be. Others would very soon hide the real unknown self that there is in me by holding up a sham portrait of an imaginary woman,

the true Madame de Maufrigneuse in the eyes of the world. He would think me unworthy of the noble love he bore me, he would think I could not understand." Again the princess shook her head with its coronet of heather among the bright golden curls. There was something sublime in the movement ; it expressed sorrowful misgivings and hidden griefs that could not be uttered. Daniel understood all that it meant. He looked at her with quick sympathy in his eyes.

"Still," she said, "when I saw him again one day, a long while after the Revolution of July, I almost gave way to a wish that came over me to grasp him by the hand, then and there before every one, in the peristyle of the Theatre Italien, and to give him my bouquet. And then—I thought that such a demonstration of gratitude would be sure to be misconstrued, like so many generous acts that people call 'Madame de Maufrigneuse's follies;' it will never be in my power to explain them; nobody save God and my son will ever know me as I really am."

Her murmured words, spoken with an accent worthy of a great actress, in tones so low that no one else could overhear them, must have thrilled any listener. They went to d'Arthez's heart. The famous man of letters was quite out of sight; this was a woman striving to rehabilitate herself for the sake of the dead. Perhaps people had slandered her to him; she wanted to know if anything had tarnished her name for this man who had loved her once. Had he died with all his illusions?

"Michel was one of those men who love wholly and completely," returned d'Arthez; "such as he, if they choose amiss, can suffer, but they can never give up her whom they have chosen."

"Then was I loved like that?" she cried, with a look of high beatitude.

"Yes, madame."

"And he was happy through me?"

“For four years.”

“No woman ever hears of such a thing without a feeling of proud satisfaction,” she said, and there was a modest confusion in the noble, sweet face that turned to his.

One of the cleverest manœuvres known to such actresses is a trick of veiling their manner if words have said too much, or of talking with their eyes when other language falls short. There is an irresistible fascination in these ingenious dissonances that creep into the music of love, or true or feigned.

“To have made a great man happy,” she went on (and her voice dropped lower and lower when she had assured herself of the effect that she had produced). “To have made a great man happy, and that without committing a crime—this is the fulfillment of one’s destiny, is it not?”

“Did he not write to you.”

“Yes, but I wanted to be quite sure; for, believe me, monsieur, when he set me so high, he was not mistaken in me.”

Women have an art of investing their utterances with a certain peculiar sacramental virtue; they can impart an indescribable something to their words, a thrill that gives them a wider significance, a greater depth; and, unless the charmed auditor subsequently takes it into his head to ask himself what those words really meant, the effect is attained—which is the peculiar aim and object of eloquence. If the princess had worn the crown of France at that moment, instead of the high plaited coronet of bright hair and wreath of delicate heather, her brows could not have looked more queenly. She seemed to d’Arthez to be walking over the tide of slander as our Saviour walked over the sea of Galilee; the shroud of her dead love wrapped her round as an aureola clings about an angel. There was not the remotest suggestion that she felt that this was the one position left to her to take up; not a hint of a desire to seem great or loving; it was done simply and quietly. No living man could have done the princess the service rendered by the dead.

D'Arthez, worker and recluse, had had no experience of the world ; study had folded him beneath its sheltering wings. Her words, her tones, found a credulous listener. He had fallen under the spell of her exquisite ways ; he was filled with admiration of her flawless beauty, matured by evil fortune, freshened by retirement ; he bowed down before that rarest combination—a vivid intellect and a noble soul. He longed, in short, to be Michel Chrestien's heir and successor.

The first beginnings of his love may be traced to an idea—a common case with your profound thinker. While he looked at his neighbor, while his eyes grew familiar with the outlines of her head, the disposition of her delicate features, her shape, her foot, her finely modeled hands ; while he saw her now on a closer view than in the days when he accompanied his friend on his wild pursuit of her carriage, he was thinking to himself that here was an instance of that wonderful thing—the power of second-sight developed in a man under the influence of love's exaltation. How clearly Michel Chrestien had read this woman's heart and soul by the light of the fire of love ! And she, too, on her side had divined the Federalist ; he might, no doubt, have been happy ! In this way the princess was invested with a great charm for d'Arthez ; a halo as of poetry shone about her.

In the course of the dinner, d'Arthez remembered Michel's confidences, Michel's despair, Michel's hopes, when he fancied that he was loved in return, and his passionate, lyrical outpourings to the one friend to whom he spoke of his love. And Daniel the while was all unconscious that he was to reap the benefit of the preparations due to chance. It very seldom happens that a confidant can pass without remorse to the estate of rival ; d'Arthez could do this, and wrong no one now. In one brief moment he realized the immense distance that separates the high-bred lady, the flower of the great world, from the ordinary woman, whom, however, he only knew by a single specimen. He had been approached on his weakest

side, touched on the tenderest spots in his soul and genius. His simplicity and his impetuous imagination urged him to possess this woman ; but he felt that the world held him back, and the princess' bearing, her majesty, be it said, raised a barrier between him and her. It was something new to him to respect the woman he loved ; and this unwonted feeling acted in a manner as an irritant ; the physical attraction grew all the more potent because he had swallowed the bait, and must keep his uneasiness to himself.

They talked of Michel Chrestien till dessert was served. It was an excuse for lowering their voices on either side. Love, sympathy, intuition—here was her opportunity of posing as a slandered, unappreciated woman ! here was his chance of stepping into the dead Republican's shoes ! Possibly a man of such candid mind may have detected within himself a certain diminution of regret for the loss of his friend.

But when the dessert shone resplendent on the table, when the light of the candles in the sconces fell upon the rich colors of fruit and sugar-plums among the bouquets of flowers, then, under shelter of the brilliant screen of blossoms that separated the guests, it pleased the princess to put an end to the confidences. With a word, a delicious word, accompanied by one of the glances that seem to turn a fair-haired woman into a brunette, she found some subtle way of expressing the idea that Daniel and Michel were twin souls. After this d'Arthez threw himself into the general conversation with boyish spirits and a slightly fatuous air not unworthy of a youth at school.

The princess took d'Arthez's arm in the simplest way when they returned to the marquise's little drawing-room. She lingered a little in the great salon, till the marquise, on Blondet's arm, was at some little distance from them. Then she stopped d'Arthez.

"It is my wish to be not inaccessible to that poor Republican's friend," she said. "I have made it a rule to receive no visitors, but you shall be the one exception. Do not think of



this as a favor. Favors are only possible between strangers, and it seems to me that we are old friends. I wish to look on you as Michel's brother."

D'Arthez could only reply by a pressure of the arm; he found nothing to say.

Coffee was served. Diane de Cadignan wrapped herself in a large shawl with coquettish grace, and rose to go. Blondet and Rastignac knew too much of the world and of courtiers' tact to try to detain her or to make any ill-bred outcry; but Mme. d'Espard, taking the princess by the hand, induced her to sit down again.

"Wait till the servants have dined," she whispered; "the carriage is not ready."

She made a sign to the footman who carried out the coffee tray. Mme. de Montcornet, guessing that Mme. d'Espard wished to speak with the princess, drew off d'Arthez, Rastignac, and Blondet by one of those wild paradoxical tirades which Parisiennes understand to admiration.

"Well?" asked the marquise. "What do you think of him?"

"He is simply an adorable child; he is scarcely out of swaddling clothes. Really, even this time there will be a victory without a struggle, as usual."

"It is disheartening," said Mme. d'Espard, "but there is one thing left."

"And that is?"

"Let me be your rival."

"That is as you shall decide. I have made up my mind what to do. Genius is a kind of cerebral existence; I do not know how to reach its heart. We will talk of this later on."

After that last enigmatic remark, Mme. d'Espard made a plunge into the conversation. Apparently she was neither hurt by the words: "That is as you shall decide," nor curious to know what might come of the interview. The princess stayed nearly an hour longer on the settee by the fireside. She

sat in a listless, careless attitude, like Dido in Guérin's picture ; and while she seemed to be absorbed in listening, she glanced now and again at Daniel with undisguised yet well-controlled admiration. The carriage was announced. She grasped the Marquise d'Espard's hand, and bowed to Mme. de Montcornet, and vanished.

The princess' name was not mentioned in the course of the evening. The rest of the party, however, reaped the benefit of d'Arthez's uplifted mood ; he talked his best ; and, indeed, in Rastignac and Blondet he had two supporters of the first rank as regard quickness of intellect and mental grasp, while the two women had long since been counted among the wittiest great ladies in Paris. To them that evening was like a halt at an oasis ; it was a rare enjoyment keenly appreciated by the quartette, who lived in constant dread of the danger-signals of society, politics, or drawing-room cliques. Some people are privileged to shine like beneficent stars upon others, giving light to their minds and warmth to their hearts. D'Arthez's was one of these finer natures. A man of letters, if he rises to the height of his position, is accustomed to think without restraint, and apt, in society, to forget that everything must not be said ; still, as there is almost always a certain originality about his divagations, no one complains of them. It was this savor of originality, so rare in mere cleverness, this simple-minded freshness, that made d'Arthez's character something nobly apart ; and in this lay the secret of that delightful evening. D'Arthez came away with the Baron de Rastignac. As they drove home, the latter naturally spoke of the princess, and asked him what he thought of her.

"No wonder Michel loved her," returned d'Arthez ; "she is no ordinary woman."

"A very extraordinary woman," Rastignac returned drily. "I can tell by the sound of your voice that you are in love with her already. You will call before three days are out ; and I am too old a hand in Paris not to know what will pass

between you. So, my dear Daniel, I beg you not to fall into any 'confusion of interests.' Love the princess by all means if you feel that you can love her, but bear your interests in mind. She has never asked or taken two centimes of any man whatsoever; she is far too much a Cadignan or d'Uxelles for that; but to my certain knowledge she has not only squandered a very considerable fortune of her own, she has made others run through millions of francs. How? why? and wherefore? Nobody can tell. She does not know herself. Thirteen years ago I saw her swallow down a charming young fellow's property and an old notary's savings to boot in twenty months."

"Thirteen years ago!" exclaimed d'Arthez; "then how old is she?"

"Why, did you not see her son?" Rastignac retorted, laughing. "That was her son at table—the Duc de Maufrigneuse, a young fellow of nineteen. And nineteen and seventeen make——"

"Thirty-six!" exclaimed the man of letters in amazement; "I took her for twenty."

"She will be quite willing; but you need have no uneasiness on that score, she will never be more than twenty for you. You are setting foot in the most fantastic of worlds. Good-night. Here you are at home," added Rastignac, as the carriage turned into the Rue de Bellefond, where d'Arthez lived in a neat house of his own. "We shall meet at Made-moiselle des Touches' in the course of the week."

D'Arthez allowed love to invade his heart after the fashion of my Uncle Toby, *videlicet*, without the least attempt at resistance. He proceeded at once to uncritical adoration, admiring the one woman and excluding all others. The princess, one of the most remarkable portents in Paris, where everything good or evil is possible—the princess, fair creature, became for him the "angel of his dreams," hackneyed though the expression may be, now that it has fallen on evil days. A full

comprehension of the sudden transformation wrought in the illustrious man of letters is impossible, unless you remember how solitude and continual work leave the heart dormant, and how painful a connection with a vulgar woman may become, when physical cravings give place to love, and love develops new desires and fancies and regrets, and calls forth the diviner impulses of the highest regions of a man's nature. D'Arthez was, indeed, the child, the schoolboy, that the princess at once discerned him to be.

And the beautiful Diane herself received an almost similar illumination. At last she had found a man above other men, the man whom all women desire to find, even if they only mean to play with him; the power that they consent to obey for the sake of gaining control of it. At last she had discovered a great intellect, combined with a boy's heart, and this in the first dawn of passion; and she saw, with happiness undreamed of, that all this wealth was contained in a form that pleased her.

D'Arthez was handsome, she thought. Perhaps he was. He had reached the sober age of maturity; he had led a quiet, regular life that had preserved a certain bloom of youth through his thirty-eight years; and, like statesmen and men of sedentary life generally, had attained a reasonable degree of stoutness. As a very young man he bore a vague resemblance to the portraits of the young Bonaparte; and the likeness was still as strong as it might be between a dark-eyed man with thick brown hair and the Emperor with his blue eyes and chestnut locks. But all the high and burning ambition that once shone in d'Arthez's eyes had been softened, as it were, by success; the thoughts that lay dormant beneath the lad's forehead had blossomed; the hollows in his face had filled up. Prosperity had mellowed the sallow tints that once told of a penurious life and faculties braced to bear the strain of incessant and exhausting toil.

If you look carefully at the finest faces among ancient

philosophers, you can always find that those deviations from the perfect type which give to each face a character of its own are rectified by the habit of meditation, and the continual repose demanded by the intellectual life. The most crabbed visage among them—that of Socrates, for instance—acquires a well-nigh divine serenity at last. In the noble simplicity that became d'Arthez's imperial face very well there was something guileless, something of a child's unconsciousness of itself, and a kindliness that went to the hearts of others. He had none of that politeness in which there is always a tinge of insincerity, none of the art by which the best-bred and most amiable people can assume those qualities which they have not, much to the discomfiture of their late-enlightened dupes. Some sins of omission he might make as a consequence of his isolation; but he never jarred upon others, and a perfume of the wilderness only enhances the gracious urbanity of the great man who lays aside his greatness to descend to the social level, and, like Henri IV., will either lend a hand in children's games or lend the elegance of his wit to fools.

If d'Arthez made no attempt at a defense, the princess, on her return home, did not open the question again with herself. There was no more to be said, so far as she was concerned; with all her knowledge and all her ignorance, she loved. She only asked herself if she deserved such great happiness—what had she done that heaven should send such an angel to her? She would be worthy of this love; it should last; it should be hers forever; the last years of youth and waning beauty should be sweet in the paradise that she saw by glimpses. As for resisting it, as for haggling over herself, or coquetting with her lover, she did not even think of it. Her thoughts were of something quite different. She understood the greatness of genius; she felt instinctively that genius is not apt to apply the ordinary rules to a woman of a thousand. So after a rapid forecast, such as none but great feminine natures

can make, she vowed to herself to surrender at the first summons. Her estimate of d'Arthez's character, based on a single interview, led her to suspect that there would be time to make what she wished of herself, to be what she meant to be in the eyes of this sublime lover, before that summons would be made.

And herewith begins an obscure comedy, played on the stage of the inner consciousness of a man and woman, each to be duped by the other, and which essays to reach the limits of perversity. "*Tartuffe*" is the merest trifle compared with such inscrutable comedies as this; they enlarge the borders of the depravity of human nature; they lie beyond the domain of dramatic art. Extraordinary as they are throughout, they are natural, conceivable, justified by necessity. Such a comedy is a horrible kind of drama, which should be entitled the seamy side of vice.

The princess began by sending for d'Arthez's books. She had not read a single word of them, but nevertheless she had kept up a flattering conversation on the subject for twenty minutes without making a single slip. She proceeded to read them through, and then tried to compare his work with that of the best contemporary writers. The result was a fit of mental indigestion on the day of d'Arthez's visit. Every day that week she had dressed with unusual care; her toilette expressed an idea for the eyes to accept, without knowing how or wherefore. So she appeared in a combination of soft shades of gray; a listless, graceful half-mourning, an appropriate costume for a woman who felt so jaded, and had nothing left to bind her to life save a few natural ties (her son perhaps). Hers, apparently, was an elegant disgust that stopped short, however, of suicide; she was finishing her allotted time in the earthly prison-house.

She received d'Arthez as though she expected his visit and had seen him at her house a hundred times, doing him the honor of treating him as an old acquaintance. The conversa-

tion began in the most commonplace way. They talked of the weather, of the Cabinet, of de Marsay's bad health, of the hopes of the Legitimist party. D'Arthez was an Absolutist. The princess could not but know the opinions of a man who sat among the fifteen or twenty Legitimist members of the Chamber of Deputies; so she took occasion to tell the story of the trick she had played de Marsay; she touched on the prince's devotion to the royal family and to MADAME; and thence, by an easy transition, brought d'Arthez's attention to the Prince de Cadignan.

"There is this at least to be said for him, he is an attached and devoted servant of his majesty," said she. "His public character consoles me for all that I have suffered from his private life. But," she continued, adroitly leaving the prince on one side, "have you not noticed (for nothing escapes you) that men have two sides to their characters? One side they show at home, to their wives; it is their true character that appears in private life; the mask is taken off, dissimulation is at an end; they do not trouble to seem other than they are; they are themselves—often they are horrible. They are great, noble, and generous for the rest of the world, for the King, and the Court, and the salons; they wear a costume embroidered with virtues and bedizened with fine language; they possess exquisite qualities in abundance. What a shocking farce it is! And yet there are people that wonder at the smile some women wear, at their air of superiority over their husbands, their indifference——"

She broke off, but allowed her hand to drop till it rested on the arm of her chair, a gesture that rounded off her discourse to admiration. D'Arthez's eyes were intent upon her lissom figure; upon the lines so gracefully curved against the silken depths of her easy-chair; upon the movements of her dress; upon a certain fascinating little wrinkle that played up and down over her bust, a daring device which only suits a waist so slender that it has nothing to lose by it. The prin-

cess, watching him, took up the order of her thoughts, as though she were speaking to herself.

"I will say no more," she said. "As for women who give themselves out for 'misunderstood,' and victims of ill-assorted unions who take themselves dramatically and pose as interesting persons—that kind of thing seems to me hopelessly vulgar, and you authors have ended by making such women very ridiculous. One must either submit, and there is no more to be said, or one resists and finds amusement. In either case a woman should keep silence. It is true that I could not make up my mind to do either, but that is so much the more reason, perhaps, for keeping silence now. How silly it is to complain! If a woman is not equal to the circumstances, if she fails in tact, or sense, or subtlety, she deserves her fate. Are not women queens in France? They play with you when they choose, as they choose, and for as long as they choose."

She swung her handsome scent-bottle, with a marvelous blending of ingenuous feminine innocence and mocking gayety in her gesture.

"I have often heard contemptible little creatures regret that they were women," she continued; "and I always felt sorry for them. If I had the choice, I would be a woman over again. Ah! the pleasure and pride of owing your triumphs to strength, to all the power put in your hands by laws of your own framing! And when we see you at our feet, doing and saying foolish things for our sakes, is it not intoxicating joy to feel that the woman's weakness triumphs? So, when we succeed, we are bound to keep silence under penalty of losing our ascendancy. And after a defeat, a woman's pride bids her be silent. The slave's silence dismays the master."

While this prattle was piped forth in those winning tones of gentle derision, with an accompaniment of little dainty turns of the head, d'Arthez was spellbound, just as a partridge

is fascinated by the sportman's dog. This kind of woman was something quite new in his experience.

"Tell me, madame, I beg of you, how any man could have made you suffer; be sure that where other women would be vulgar, you would be distinguished, even if you had not a manner of saying things that would make a cookery-book interesting."

"You are going far in friendship," she said, so gravely, that d'Arthez grew serious and uneasy.

She changed the subject. It grew late. The man of genius, poor fellow, went away in a contrite frame of mind; he had seemed inquisitive; he had hurt her feelings; and he was convinced that she had suffered as few women suffer. Diane had spent her life in amusing herself; she was neither more nor less than a feminine Don Juan, with this difference—if she had tempted the stone statue it would not have been with an invitation to supper, and she certainly would not have had the worst of the encounter.

It is impossible to continue this history without a word as to the Prince de Cadignan (better known as the Duc de Maufrigneuse), or the whole salt and savor of the princess' miraculous inventions will be lost upon the reader. An outsider could never understand the atrocity of the comedy which the lady has been playing for the benefit of a man of letters. In person M. le Duc de Maufrigneuse, like his father the Prince de Cadignan, was tall and spare; he was a complete fine gentleman, his urbanity never deserted him; he made charming speeches; he became a colonel by the grace of God, and a good soldier by accident. In other respects the prince was as brave as a Pole, showed his valor on all occasions without discrimination, and used the jargon of Court circles to hide his mental vacuity. Ever since he attained the age of thirty-six he had been perforce as indifferent to the sex as his royal master King Charles X.; for, like his master, he had found too much favor with the fair in his youth, and now was paying

the penalty. He had been the idol of the Faubourg Saint-Germain for eighteen years, during which time he led the dissipated, pleasure-filled life of an eldest son.

The Revolution had ruined his father; and though after the Restoration the late prince had recovered his post, the governorship of a royal castle, with a salary and divers pensions, he had kept up the state of a great lord of old days, and squandered his fortune during the brief gleam of prosperity to such purpose, that all the sums repaid him by the law of indemnity went in a display of luxury in his immense old mansion. It was the only piece of property left him, and the greater part of it was occupied by his daughter-in-law. The old Prince de Cadignan died at the ripe age of eighty-seven, some years before the Revolution of July. He had ruined his wife, and for a long time there had been something like a coolness between him and his son-in-law, the Duc de Navarreins; the duke's first wife had been a Cadignan, and the accounts of the trust of her fortune had never been satisfactorily settled.

The present prince (then the Duc de Maufrigneuse) had had a *liaison* with the Duchesse d'Uxelles. Toward 1814, when the duke reached his thirty-sixth year, the duchess, seeing that he was poor but stood very well at Court, gave him her daughter with a rent-roll of fifty or sixty thousand livres, to say nothing of expectations. In this way Mlle. d'Uxelles became a duchess, her mother knowing that in all probability the newly married wife would be allowed great liberty. An heir was born, after which unexpected piece of good fortune the duke left his wife complete freedom of action, amused himself by going from garrison to garrison, spent the winters in Paris, contracted debts which his father paid, and professed the most complete indifference for his wife. He always gave the duchess a week's warning before returning to Paris. Adored by his regiment, in high favor with the Dauphin, an adroit courtier, and something of a gambler, there was no sort

of affectation about the Duc de Maufrigneuse; the duchess never could persuade him to take up an opera girl, out of regard for appearances and consideration for her, as she pleasantly said. The duke succeeded to his father's post at Court, and contrived to please both Louis XVIII. and Charles X., which shows that he understood how to turn a colorless character to a tolerably good account; and beside, his life and behavior were covered by the most elegant veneer. In language and fine manners he was a perfect model; he was popular even among Liberals. The Cadignans, according to the prince his father, were famous for ruining their wives; in this respect, however, he found it impossible to keep up the family tradition, the duchess was running through her fortune too quickly for him.

These little details of the family history were public property at Court and in the Faubourg Saint-Germain; so much so, in fact, that if any one had begun to discuss them, he would have been met with a smile. A man might as well have announced the capture of Holland by the Dutch. No woman ever mentioned the "charming duke" without a word of praise. His conduct toward his wife had been perfect; it was not a small thing for a man to behave himself as well as Maufrigneuse had done, he had left the duchess' fortune entirely at her disposal; he had given her his support and countenance on every occasion. And, indeed, from pride, or good nature, or from some chivalrous feeling, M. de Maufrigneuse had many a time come to the duchess' rescue; any other woman would have gone under, in spite of her connections, in spite of the combined credit of the old Duchesse d'Uxelles, the Duc de Navarreins, the old Prince de Cadignan, and her husband's aunt. The present prince is allowed to be one of the true nobles among the nobility. And, perhaps, if a courtier is faithful at need, he has won the finest of all victories over himself.

The Duchesse d'Uxelles was a woman of five-and-forty

when she married her daughter to the Duc de Maufrigneuse, and therefore she saw her old friend's success not merely without jealousy, but with interest. At the time of the marriage she had shown herself a great lady and saved the situation; though she could not prevent scoffing on the part of spiteful persons at Court, who said that the duchess' noble conduct cost her no great effort, albeit she had given the past five years to repentance and devotion, after the manner of women who stand in great need of forgiveness.

To return to Diane de Cadignan. The extent of the knowledge of literature which she displayed grew more and more remarkable day by day. She could venture with the utmost boldness upon the most abstruse questions, thanks to studies daily and nightly pursued with an intrepidity worthy of all praise. D'Arthez was bewildered. He was incapable of suspecting that Diane, like a good many writers, repeated at night what she read of a morning. He took her for a woman of no ordinary power. In the course of these conversations they wandered further and further from the end that Diane had in view; she tried to return to the ground of confidential talk, but it was not very easy to bring a man of d'Arthez's temper back to a subject after he had once been warned from it. However, after a month of excursions into literature and beautiful Platonic discourses, d'Arthez grew bolder, and came every day at three o'clock. At six he took leave, only to return three hours later to stay till midnight or one o'clock in the morning. This with the regularity of an impatient lover; and the princess, on her side, was always more or less carefully dressed at his hours. The tryst thus kept daily, the pains that they both took with themselves, their whole proceedings, in fact, expressed the feelings to which neither of them dared confess; and the princess divined in some marvelous way that the grown child dreaded the coming contest as much as she herself longed for it. And yet d'Arthez's manner was a

constant declaration of love—a declaration made with a respect which was inexpressibly pleasant to the princess. Every day they felt so much the more closely drawn together, because there was no convention, no sharp line of difference to arrest the progress of their ideas; no barrier was raised, as frequently happens between lovers, by formal demands on the one side and coquettish or sincere demurs upon the other. Like most men whose youth lasts on into middle age, d'Arthez was consumed by a poignant irresolution caused by vehement desires on the one hand, and the dread of incurring his mistress' displeasure on the other. A young woman understands nothing of all this while she shares the emotion, but the princess was too experienced not to linger over its delights. So Diane enjoyed to the full the delicious child's-play of love, finding all the more charm in it because she knew so well how to put an end to it. She was like a great artist, dwelling complacently on the vague outlines of a sketch, sure of the coming hour of inspiration that shall shape a masterpiece out of an idea that floats as yet in the limbo of things unborn. How many a time, as she saw that d'Arthez was ready to advance, she amused herself by checking him with her queenly air. She could control the tempest in the man's boyish heart, she could raise the storm and still it again, by a glance, by giving him her hand to kiss, by some commonplace word uttered in a soft, tremulous voice.

This policy of hers had been coolly resolved upon, and she acted it out divinely, gradually deepening the lines of the image engraven upon the heart of a clever man of letters of whom it pleased her to make a child. With her he was trustful, open, almost simple; and yet at times something like a reaction would set in, and she could not but admire the man's greatness, blended with such innocence. The arch-coquette's play was binding her at unawares to her bond-slave. At length Diane grew impatient with her love-sick Epictetus; and as soon as she felt that he was disposed to put a blind

faith in her, she set herself to tie a thick bandage over his eyes.

One evening Daniel found the princess in a pensive mood. She was sitting with one elbow on the table, her bright golden head bathed in the lamplight, while she played with a letter, absently tapping it upon the tablecloth. When d'Arthez had been allowed a full view of the letter, she folded it and thrust it into her belt.

"What is the matter?" asked d'Arthez. "You look troubled."

"I have heard from Monsieur de Cadignan," she replied. "Deeply as he has wronged me, I have been thinking, since I read this letter, that he is an exile, and alone; he is fond of his son, and his son is away from him."

Her soul seemed to vibrate through her voice; to d'Arthez it was a revelation of a divine sensitiveness to another's pain. It touched him to the quick. His lover's eagerness to read her became, as it were, a piece of curious literary and scientific inquiry. If he could only know the height of her woman's greatness; the full extent of the injuries forgiven; and learn how near the angels a woman of the world may rise while others accuse her of frivolity and selfishness and hardness of heart! Then he remembered that once before he had sought to know this angel's heart, and how he had been repulsed. He took the slender transparent hand with its taper fingers in his, and said, with something like a tremor in his voice: "Are we friends enough now for you to tell me what you have suffered? Old troubles must count for something in your musings."

"Yes," said the fair Diane, prolonging the one syllable; Tulou's flute never sighed forth a sweeter sound. Then she drifted again into musings, her eyes clouded over; and as Daniel waited in anxious suspense, the solemnity of the moment penetrated his being. His poet's imagination beheld the cloud veiling the sanctuary; slowly the obscurity would

clear away, and he should behold the wounded lamb lying at the feet of God.

"Well?" he said softly and quietly.

Diane looked into his face with its look of tender entreaty, then her eyes fell slowly, and the lashes drooped; the movement was a revelation of the noblest delicacy. A man must have been a monster to imagine that there could be a taint of hypocrisy in the graceful curve of the throat, as Diane raised her little dainty head to send a glance into the very depths of those hungry eyes.

"Can I? and ought I?" she began, with a certain hesitation, and her face wore a sublime expression of dreamy tenderness as she gazed at d'Arthez. "Men keep faith so little in such things. They feel so little bound to secrecy."

"Ah! but if you cannot trust me, why am I here?" he cried.

"Ah! my friend, does a woman calculate when she binds herself to a friendship for life?" answered Diane, and there was all the charm of an involuntary confession about her words. "It is not a question of refusing you (what can I refuse to you?); but what would you think of me if I should speak? Willingly I would tell you of my position, a strange one at my age; but what would you think of a wife who should lay bare the wounds dealt her by her own husband, and betray the secrets of another? Turenne kept his word with thieves; ought I not to show the honor of a Turenne toward those who tortured me?"

"Have you given your word to any one?"

"Monsieur de Cadignan thought it unnecessary to ask for secrecy. So you would have more of me than myself? Ah! tyrant, am I to bury my honesty in you?" and her glance made the pretended confidence seem something greater than the gift of her person.

"You rate me rather too low if you can fear any wrong whatsoever from me," he said with ill-disguised bitterness.

"Forgive me, my friend," she said. She took his hand in hers, caressing it with a most loving soft touch of her fingers. "I know all your worth. You have told me the story of your life; it is a noble, a beautiful story; it is sublime, it is worthy of your name; perhaps you think I owe you mine in return? But at this very moment I am afraid of lowering myself in your eyes by telling secrets that are not mine only. And, poet and lonely thinker as you are, perhaps you may not believe in the horrors of worldly life. Oh! when you invent your tragedies, you little know what tragedies are going on in many an apparently closely united family! You do not imagine the extent of the wretchedness beneath the gilding."

"I know all," he cried.

"No, nothing," she answered. "Ought a daughter to betray her mother?"

At those words of hers, d'Arthez felt as if he had lost his way in darkness among the Alps, and found, with the first glimpse of dawn, that he stood on the very edge of a bottomless precipice. He looked with dazed eyes at the princess, and a cold chill crept over him. For a moment Diane thought that the man of genius was a weakling; but a flash in his eyes reassured her.

"And now, you are almost like a judge for me," she said despairingly. "And I may speak, for every slandered creature has a right to prove its innocence. I have been, nay—if any one remembers a poor recluse, a woman forced by the world to renounce the world—I am still accused of such light conduct, of so many sins, that I may be forgiven for putting myself in the true light for the heart in which I find a refuge from which I shall not be driven forth. It has always seemed to me that self-justification tells heavily against innocence; for that reason I have always scorned to defend myself; to whom, indeed, could I speak? Painful things like these can only be confided to God, or to some one very near Him, to a priest or to a second self. Ah, well, if my secrets are not

there," she added, laying a hand on d'Arthez's breast. "as they are here" (bending the busk of her corset with her fingers), "you cannot be the great d'Arthez, and I have been mistaken in you."

D'Arthez's eyes filled, and Diane drank in those tears; she gave him a sidelong glance with steady eyes and unquivering eyelids. It was as deft and neat as a cat's spring on a mouse. Then, for the first time, after sixty days of protocols, d'Arthez took the warm, moist hand, carried it to his lips, and set a kiss upon it—a slow, long kiss, drawn from the wrist to the finger-tips, taken with such delicate rapture that the princess, bending her head, augured very well of literature. In her opinion, men of genius ought to love more perfectly than men of the world, coxcombs, diplomats, or even military men, though these certainly have nothing else to do. Diane had had experience. She knew that a man's character as a lover is revealed by very small signs and tokens. If a woman is learned in this lore, she can tell from a mere gesture what she has to expect; much as Cuvier could examine a fragment of a fossil foot, and say: "This belonged to an animal that lived so many thousand years ago; its habit was amphibious, carnivorous, herbivorous, or what not; it had or had not horns, and so forth." She felt sure that the imagination which d'Arthez put into his literary style would show itself in his love; so she held it expedient to bring him to the highest degree of passion and belief in her. She drew her hand back at once, with a magnificent gesture fraught with emotion. If she had said in words: "No more of that, you will kill me!" she could not have spoken more forcibly. For a moment her eyes rested upon his; joy and fear and prudery and confidence and languor; a vague longing and something of a maiden's shyness were mingled in their expression. For that moment she was a girl of twenty. She had prepared, you may be sure, for that hour's comedy: never had woman dressed herself with such art; and now, as she sat in her great chair, she

looked like a flower ready to open out at the first kiss of the sun. Real or artificial, whichever she was, she intoxicated Daniel.

And here, if it is permissible to hazard a personal opinion, let us confess that it would be delightful to be thus deceived for as long as possible. Talma on the stage certainly rose far above nature many a time; but is not the *Princesse de Cadignan* the greatest actress of our day? Nothing was wanting to her save an attentive audience. But, unfortunately, women disappear in stormy epochs; they are like water-lilies, they must have a cloudless sky and the softest of warm breezes if they are to blossom and spread themselves before our enchanted eyes.

The hour had come. Diane was about to entangle a great man in the inextricable toils of a romance that had long been growing; and he was to listen to it as a catechumen might have listened to an epistle from one of the apostles in the palmy days of the Christian church.

“My mother, who is still living at Uxelles, married me in 1814 to Monsieur de Maufrigneuse when I was seventeen years old (you see, my friend, how old I am). She made the match, not out of love for me, but from love of *him*. He was the only man she had ever cared for; so she repaid him in this way for all the happiness that he had given her. Oh! do not be shocked by the ugly combination; it is a thing that often happens. Some women put their lover before their children, just as most women are mothers rather than wives. The two instincts of wifely love and motherhood, developed as they are by social conditions, often come into conflict in a woman’s heart. One of them must necessarily supplant the other unless both kinds of love are equally strong, as sometimes happens with an extraordinary woman, the glory of our sex. A man of your genius surely will understand these things; fools wonder at them, yet they are none the less founded in nature. I will go further, they are justifiable by

differences in character, temperament, situation, and the nature of the attachment. If I myself, for instance, at this moment, —after twenty years of misfortune, and disappointment, and heavy trials, and hollow pleasures, and slander which I could not refute—if I were offered a true and lasting love, might I not feel ready to fling myself at the feet of the man who offered it? If I did, would not the world condemn me? And yet, surely twenty years of wretchedness ought to buy absolution for twelve years given to a pure and hallowed love—the twelve years of life that remain before I fade? But it will not be; I am not foolish enough to diminish my merits in the eyes of God. I have borne the burden and heat of the day until evening; I will finish my day; I shall have earned my reward——”

“What an angel!” thought d’Arthez.

“In short, though the Duchesse d’Uxelles cared more for de Maufrigneuse than for the poor Diane whom you see before you, I have never borne her a grudge. My mother had scarcely seen me; she had forgotten me; but her behavior to me, as between woman and woman, was bad; and what is bad between woman and woman becomes hateful between mother and daughter. Mothers that lead such a life as the Duchesse d’Uxelles led keep their daughters at a distance. I only ‘came out’ fourteen days before my marriage. Judge of my innocence! I knew nothing; I was incapable of guessing the motives that brought the match about. I had a fine fortune—sixty thousand livres a year from forests, which they either could not sell or had forgotten to sell during the Revolution, and the château d’Anzy in the Nivernais to which the forest belonged. Monsieur de Maufrigneuse was burdened with debts. If I afterward came to understand what debts meant, at the time of my marriage I was too completely ignorant of life to suspect the significance of the word. The accumulated interest of my fortune went to pacify my husband’s creditors.

“Monsieur de Maufrigneuse was thirty-eight years old when I was married to him; but those years were like a soldier's campaigns, they should count double. Oh, he was far more than seventy-six years old. My mother at the age of forty had still some pretensions to beauty; and I found that I was between jealousy on either side. What a life I led for the next ten years! Ah! if people but knew how the poor, much-suspected young wife suffered! To be watched by a mother who was jealous of her own daughter! Ah, God! You writers of tragedies will never invent a drama so dark and so cruel! I think, from the little I know of literature, that a play as a rule is a series of events, conversations, and actions which lead to the catastrophe; but this thing of which I am speaking to you is a most dreadful catastrophe without end. It is as if the avalanche that fell this morning should fall again at night—and yet again next morning. A cold shudder runs through me while I speak of it, while I light up the cavern from which there was no escape, the cold, gloomy place where I used to live. If you must know all, the birth of my child—altogether mine, indeed, for you must surely have been struck by his likeness to me?—he has my hair, my eyes, the outline of my face, my mouth, my smile, my chin, my teeth—well, my child's birth was due either to chance or to some agreement between my mother and my husband. For long after my marriage I was still a girl; I was abandoned, so to speak, directly afterward; I was a mother, but a girl still. The duchess was pleased to prolong the period of ignorance, and to attain this end a mother has horrible advantages. As for me, a poor, little creature brought up like a mystic rose in a convent, I knew nothing of married life, I developed late, and felt very happy; I rejoiced over the good understanding and the harmony that prevailed in the family. I did not care much for my husband, and he took no pains to please me; and at length my thoughts were altogether diverted from him by the first joys of motherhood, joys the more keenly felt be-

cause I had no suspicion that there could be any others. So much had been dinned into my ears about the respect that a mother owed herself! And beside, a girl always loves to 'play at mamma.' At that age a child is as good as a doll. I was so proud too to have that lovely flower, for Georges was a lovely child—a wonder! How could one think of society while one had the pleasure of nursing and tending a little angel? I adore little children while they are quite little and pink and white. So I saw no one but my baby; I lived with him; I would not allow his nurse to dress or undress him or to change his clothes. The little cares that grow so wearisome to the mother of a regiment of babes were all pure pleasure to me. But after three or four years, as I am not altogether a fool, the light broke in upon me in spite of all the pains they took to bandage my eyes. Can you imagine me when the awakening came, four years afterward, in 1819? '*Deux Frères ennemis*' (Two Brothers' Enmity) is a rose-water tragedy compared with the dramatic situation in which the duchess and I, mother and daughter, were placed with regard to each other. Then I defied both her and my husband by flirting publicly in a way that made people talk. Heaven knows what they did not say. You can understand, my friend, that the men with whom I was accused of light conduct were simply daggers that I used to defend myself against the enemy. My thoughts were so full of revenge that I did not feel the wounds that I dealt myself. I was innocent as a child; people looked upon me as a depraved woman, one of the worst of women. I knew nothing of this.

"The world is very stupid, very ignorant, very blind. People only penetrate into the secrets that interest them and serve their spite; but when the greatest and noblest things are to be seen, they put their hands before their eyes. And yet it seems to me that the pride that thrilled through me and shook me in those days, the indignant innocence in my expression and attitudes, would have been a godsend to a

great painter. The tempest of anger in me must have flashed like lightning through a ballroom ; my disdain must have poured out like a flood. It was wasted passion. Nothing save the indignation of twenty years can rise to such sublime tragic heights. As we grow older we cannot feel indignant, we are tired ; evil is not a surprise ; we grow cowardly, we are afraid. As for me, I made fine progress. I acted like the veriest fool ; I bore the blame of wrongdoing, and had none of the pleasure. I enjoyed compromising myself. I played child's tricks.

"I went to Italy with a hare-brained boy ; he made love to me, and I threw him over ; but when I found out that he had got himself into a scrape on my account (he had forged a bill), I hurried to the rescue. My mother and my husband, who knew the secret of it all, kept a tight hand over me as an extravagant wife. Oh ! that time I went to the King. Louis XVIII., though he had no heart, was touched. He gave me a hundred thousand francs out of the privy purse. The Marquis d'Esgrignon* (you may perhaps have met him in society, he married a very rich heiress afterward), the Marquis d'Esgrignon was rescued from the depths into which he plunged for me. This adventure, brought about by my heedlessness, made me reflect. I saw then that I was the first to suffer from my revenge. My mother and husband and father-in-law had every one on their side ; they stood to all appearance between me and the consequences of my recklessness. My mother knew that I was far too proud, too great, too truly a d'Uxelles, to do anything commonplace ; about this time she grew frightened by the mischief she had done. She was fifty-two years old. She left Paris and went to live at d'Uxelles. Now she repents of her sins toward me, and expiates them by the most extravagant devotion and boundless love. But in 1823 she left me alone, face to face with de Maufrigneuse.

"Oh, my friend, you men cannot know what an elderly

* See "The Collection of Antiquities."

man of pleasure is ; nor what a house is like when a man is accustomed to have women of the world burning incense before him, and finds neither censer nor perfumes at home ; when he is dead to everything, and jealous for that very reason. When de Maufrigneuse was mine alone, I tried, I tried to be a good wife ; but I came into conflict with the asperities of a morose temper, with all the fancies of an effete voluptuary ; the driveling puerilities, the vain self-sufficiency of a man who was, to tell truth, the most tedious, maundering grumbler in the world. He treated me like a little girl ; it gave him pleasure to humiliate me on every occasion, to crush me with the bludgeon of his experience, and to show me how completely ignorant I was. He mortified me at every moment. He did everything, in fact, to make himself detestable and to give me a right to deceive him ; but for three or four years I was the dupe of my own heart and my desire to do right. Do you know what a shameful speech it was that urged me to fresh recklessness ? Could you imagine the supreme lengths to which slander is carried in society ? ‘The Duchesse de Maufrigneuse has gone back to her husband,’ people said. ‘Pooh ! out of sheer depravity ; it is a triumph to quicken the dead, nothing else remains for her to do,’ replied my best friend, a relative at whose house I had the pleasure of meeting you.”

“Madame d’Espard !” exclaimed Daniel, aghast.

“Oh, I have forgiven her, my friend. The speech was extremely clever, to go no further, and I may perhaps have said more cruel things of other unhappy women who were quite as pure as I was.”

Again d’Arthez kissed her hands. The sainted woman had chopped her mother in pieces and served her up to him ; the Prince de Cadignan, whose acquaintance we have previously made, had been put forward as an Othello of the blackest dye ; and now she was acknowledging her faults and scourging herself vigorously—all to assume, for the eyes of this guileless

man of letters, that virgin estate which the simplest woman tries at all costs to offer to her lover.

"You can understand, my friend, that when I went back into the world, it was to make a sensation, and I intended to make a sensation. There were fresh struggles to be gone through ; I had to gain independence and to counteract Monsieur de Maufrigneuse. So I began a life of dissipation for new reasons. I tried to forget myself, I tried to forget real life in a life of dreams ; I shone in society, I entertained ; I was a princess, and I got into debt. At home I found forgetfulness in sleep. Beautiful, high-spirited, and reckless, I began a new life in the world ; but in the weary struggle between dreams and reality I ran through my fortune.

"The revolt of 1830 came just as this chapter out of the 'Arabian Nights' drew to an end ; and just at that time I found the pure and sacred love which I longed to know. (I am frank with you !) It was not unnatural (admit) that when a woman's heart had been repressed again and again by fate, it should awaken at last at the age when a woman sees that she has been cheated of her due ? I saw that so many women about me were happy through love. Oh ! why was Michel Chrestien so much in awe of me ? There again is another irony in my life. There was no help for it. When the crash came I had lost everything ; I had not a single illusion left ; I had pressed out the last drops of all experience, but of one fruit I had not tasted, and I had neither taste nor teeth left for it. In short, by the time I was obliged to leave the world I was disenchanted. There was something providential in this, as in the insensibility that prepares us for death," she added, with a gesture full of religious unction.

"Everything that happened just then helped me," she continued ; "the downfall and ruin of the Monarchy buried me out of sight. My son makes up to me for a great deal. Motherhood compensates us for all our thwarted powers of loving. People are astonished by my retreat, but I have

found happiness. Oh! if you but knew how happy the poor creature before you has grown. The joys which I have not known, and shall never know, are all forgotten in the joy of sacrificing myself for my son's sake. Who could think that life, for the *Princesse de Cadignan*, would be summed up by a wretched marriage-night, the adventures with which she is credited, and a childish defiance of two dark passions? Nobody could believe it. At this day I am afraid of everything. I remember so many delusions and misfortunes that I should be sure to repulse genuine feeling, and pure love for love's sake; just as rich men repulse the deserving poor because some hypocritical knave has disgusted them with charity. All this is horrible, is it not? But, believe me, this that I have told you is the history of many another woman."

The last words were spoken in light jesting tones, which recalled the flippant woman of fashion. D'Arthez was dazed. The convict sent to the hulks for robbery and murder with aggravating circumstances, or for forging a signature on a bill, was in his eyes a saintly innocent compared with men and women of the world. Though the atrocious jeremiad had been forged in the arsenal of falsehood, and dipped in the waters of the Parisian Styx, there was an unmistakable ring of truth in the duchess' tones. D'Arthez gazed at her for a little while; and she (adorable woman) lay in the depths of her great chair, her white hands resting over the arms like drops of dew at the edge of a flower-petal. She was overcome by her own revelations; she seemed to have lived again through all her past sorrows as she spoke of them, and now sank exhausted. She was an angel of melancholy, in fact.

Suddenly she sat upright, and raised her hand, while lightnings blazed in the eyes that were supposed to be purified by twenty years of chastity. "Judge of the impression that your friend's love must have made on me!" she cried; "but by the savage irony of fate—or was it God's irony?—he died; he died when (I confess it) I was so thirsty for love that if a

man had been worthy of me, he would have found me weak ; he died to save the life of another, and that other was—who but Monsieur de Cadignan ? Are you surprised to find me pensive ? ”

It was the last stroke. Poor d’Arthez could bear no more. He fell on his knees before her, he hid his face in her hands, and his tears fell fast—happy tears, such as angels might shed, if angels weep. And since Daniel’s face was hidden, Mme. de Cadignan could allow a mischievous smile of triumph to steal across her mouth, a smile such as monkeys might summon up over a piece of superlative mischief, if monkeys laugh.

“Aha ! I have him fast ! ” thought she.

And true enough, she had him fast.

“Then you are——” He began raising that fine head of his to gaze lovingly into her eyes.

“Virgin and martyr,” she finished his sentence for him, smiling at the commonplace phrase, but her cruel smile lent an enchanting significance to the words. “I laugh,” she said, “because I am thinking of the princess as the world knows her, of that Duchesse de Maufrigneuse to whom the world assigns de Marsay as a lover ; and the villainous political bravo, de Trailles ; and empty-head little d’Esgrignon, and Rastignac, and Rubempré, and ambassadors and Cabinet ministers and Russian generals—and all Europe, for anything I know. There has been much gossip about this album that I had made ; people believe that all my admirers were my lovers. Oh ! it is shocking ! I cannot think how I can suffer a man at my feet ; I ought to despise them all ; that should be my creed.”

She rose and stood in the window ; her manner of going was full of magnificent suggestion.

D’Arthez stayed on the hearth-stool where he had been sitting. He did not dare to follow the princess, but he gazed at her, he heard her use her handkerchief. It was a pure matter of form ; what is a princess that blows her nose ?

Diane tried to do the impossible to confirm d'Arthez's belief in her sensibility. His angel was in tears! He flew to her, put his arm about her waist, and held her tightly to him.

"No, no, leave me," she murmured faintly. "I have too many doubts to be good for anything. The task of reconciling me with life is beyond a man's strength."

"Diane! I will give you love for all the life that you have lost!"

"No, do not talk to me like that," she answered. "I feel guilty; I am trembling at this moment as if I had committed the worst of sins."

Diane had recovered a little maid's innocence, yet nevertheless she stood before him august and great and noble as a queen. It was a clever manœuvre, so clever that she had wheeled round from seeming, and reached the actual truth; and as for d'Arthez, no words will describe the effect produced by it upon his inexperience and open nature. Great man of letters as he was, he stood dumb with admiration, a passive spectator waiting for a word, while the princess waited for a kiss. But she had grown too sacred to him for that. Diane felt cold in the window; her feet were freezing; she went back to her old position in the chair.

"He will be a long while about it," thought she, looking at Daniel with a proud forehead and face sublime with virtue.

"Is she a woman?" the profound observer of human nature was asking of himself. "How should one act with her?"

They spent their time till two o'clock in the morning in the fond, foolish talk that such women as the princess can turn into adorable intercourse. She was too old, she said, too faded, too much of a wreck; d'Arthez proved to her that she had the most delicate, soft, and fragrant skin; delicious to touch, and white and fair to see, of which things she was fully convinced in her own mind. She was young; she was in her flower. Her beauty was disputed, charm by charm, detail by

detail, with—"Do you think so? You are raving! This is desire. In a fortnight you will see me as I am. In truth, I am verging on forty; how should any one love a woman of my age?"

D'Arthez was impetuous as a schoolboy, his eloquence was sown thickly with the most extravagant words. And the princess, listening, laughed within herself, while she heard the ingenuous writer talking like a love-sick sub-lieutenant, and seemed to drink in the nonsense, and to be quite touched by it.

Out in the street d'Arthez asked himself whether he ought not to have been less in awe of her. As he went through the strange confidences that had been made to him—naturally, they have been much abridged and condensed here, for the mellifluous utterances given in full, with their appropriate commentary of expression and gesture, would fill a volume—as he looked through his memory, the plausibility of the romance, the depths below the surface, and the princess' tones, all combined to foil the retrospective sagacity of an acute but straightforward man.

"It is true," he told himself as he lay wide awake; "it is true that there are tragedies in society. Society hides such horrors as this beneath the flowers of delicate luxury, the embellishments of scandal, and the sparkle of anecdotes. We cannot imagine anything that has not happened. Poor Diane! Michel caught a glimpse of the enigma when he told us that there were volcanic fires under the ice! And Bianchon and Rastignac are right too. When a man can find his high ideals and the intoxication of desire both blended in the love of a woman—a woman of quick intelligence and refinement and dainty ways—it must surely be unspeakable bliss."

He tried to fathom the love in his heart, and found no limits.

Toward two o'clock next day, Mme. d'Espard called on the princess. An intense curiosity brought her. For more

than a month she had neither seen her friend nor received a single tell-tale word. Nothing could be more amusing than the first half-hour of the conversation between two daughters of Eve endowed with the wisdom of the serpent. Diane de Cadignan shunned the subject of d'Arthez as she would avoid a yellow dress. And the marquise wheeled around the question as a Bedouin Arab might hover about a rich caravan. Diane enjoyed the situation; the marquise grew furious. Diane was watching her opportunity; she meant to turn her dear friend to account as a sporting dog. And one of the two celebrated women was more than a match for the other. The princess rose a head above the marquise; and Mme. d'Espard in her own mind admitted her inferiority. Herein, possibly, lay the secret of the bond between them. The weaker spirit of the two lay low, feigning an attachment, watching for the moment so long looked for by the weak, the chance of springing at the throat of the strong, and leaving the impress of one joyous bite. Diane saw this perfectly well. The rest of the world was completely deceived by the amenities that passed between the two dear friends.

The princess waited; and as soon as she saw the question rise to her friend's lips, she said: "Well, dear; I owe a great, complete, and boundless happiness to you."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you remember our ruminations three months ago, as we sat out in the garden on the bench under the jessamine in the sun? Ah! well; no one can love like a man of genius. I would willingly say of my great Daniel d'Arthez as Catherine de' Medici said of the Duke of Alva: 'One salmon's head is worth all the frogs' heads in the world.'"

"I am not at all surprised that you do not come to me," said Mme. d'Espard.

"Promise me, my angel, if he goes to see you, not to say a word of me," continued the princess, as she took the marquise's hand. "I am happy—oh! happy beyond words—

and you know how far an epigram or a jest may go in society. A word can be fatal ; some people can put so much poison in a word. If you only knew how I have wished during the past week that you too might find such a passionate love ! And, indeed, it is sweet ; it is a glorious triumph for us women if we may finish our lives as women thus, with an ardent, pure, complete, whole-hearted, and devoted love to soothe us at last after so long a quest."

"Why ask me to be true to my best friend?" said Mme. d'Espard. "Can you think me capable of playing you a vile trick?"

"When a woman possesses such a treasure, it is so natural to fear to lose it, that the thought of fear occurs to her at once. I am absurd. Forgive me, dear."

A few moments later the marquise took leave.

"What a character she will give me!" thought the princess as she watched her departure. "But I will save her the trouble of tearing Daniel away; I will send him to her at once."

Daniel came in a few minutes afterward. In the middle of an interesting conversation the princess suddenly interrupted him, laying her beautiful hand on his arm.

"Forgive me, my friend, but I might forget to mention something; it seems a silly trifle, yet it is a matter of the utmost importance. You have not set foot in Madame d'Espard's house since that day—a thousand times blessed!—when I met you for the first time. Go to her; not out of politeness, but for my sake. Perhaps she may be offended with me; she may possibly have chanced to hear that you have scarcely left my house, so to speak, since her dinner-party. And beside, my friend, I should not like you to give up your connections and society, nor your work and occupations. I should be more outrageously slandered than ever. What would they not say of me? 'That I am holding you in a leash, that I am monopolizing you, that I am afraid of comparisons, that I

want to be talked about even now, and I am taking good care to keep my conquest, for I know that it will be the last'—and so on and so on. Who could guess that you are my one and only friend? If you love me as you tell me you do, you will make people believe that we are to each other as brother and sister and nothing more. Go on."

There was an ineffable sweetness in the way in which this charming woman arranged her robes so as to fall gracefully; it always schooled d'Arthez into obedience. A vague, subtle refinement in her discourse touched him even to tears. Other women might haggle and dispute the way inch by inch, in sofa-converse; the princess rose at once above all ignoble and vulgar bargainings to a height of greatness unknown before. She had no need to utter a word, they understood their union nobly. It should be when they willed it upon either side; there was no yesterday, to-day, or to morrow for them; there should be none of the interminable hoisting of the pennon styled "sacrifice" by ordinary women, doubtless because they know how much they are certain to lose, while a woman who has everything to gain knows that the festival will be her day of triumph.

Diane's words had been vague as a promise, sweet as hope, and binding, nevertheless, as a pledge. Let it be admitted at once, the only women who can rise thus high are illustrious and supreme deceivers like Diane; they are queens still when other women find a lord and master. By this time d'Arthez had learned to measure the distance that separates these few from the many. The princess was always beautiful, never wanting to herself. Perhaps the secret lies in the art with which a great lady can lay veil after veil aside, till in this position she stands like an antique statue. To retain a single shred would be indecent. The bourgeoisie always tries to clothe herself.

Broken to the yoke by tenderness, and sustained by the noblest virtues, d'Arthez obediently went to Mme. d'Espard's.

On him she exerted her most charming coquetry. She was very careful not to mention the princess' name; she merely asked him to dine with her at an early date.

On that day d'Arthez found a large party invited to meet him. The marquise had asked Rastignac, Blondet, the Marquis d'Ajuda-Pinto, Maxime de Trailles, the Marquis d'Esgrignon, the two Vandenesses, du Tillet (one of the richest bankers in Paris), the Baron de Nucingen, Nathan, Lady Dudley, one or two of the wildest attachés from the embassy, and the Chevalier d'Espard. The chevalier, be it said, was one of the most astute personages in the room, and counted for a good half in the schemes of his sister-in-law.

Maxime de Trailles turned to d'Arthez.

"You see a good deal of the Princesse de Cadignan, don't you?" he asked, with a laugh.

D'Arthez replied with a stiff inclination of the head. Maxime de Trailles was a bravo of a superior order; he feared neither God nor man; he shrank from nothing. Women had loved him, he had ruined them, and made them pledge their diamonds to pay his debts;* but his shortcomings were covered by a brilliant veneer, by charming manners, and a diabolical cleverness. Everybody feared him, everybody despised him; but nobody was bold enough to treat him with anything short of extreme civility. He could see nothing of all this, or possibly he lent himself to the general dissimulation. De Marsay had helped him to reach the highest elevation that he could attain. De Marsay, having known Maxime from of old, judged him capable of fulfilling certain diplomatic functions in the secret service, of which Maxime had, in fact, acquitted himself to admiration. D'Arthez had been mixed up in political affairs for some time past; he knew enough of the man to fathom his character; and he alone, it may be, was sufficiently high-minded to say aloud what others thought.

* See "Father Goriot."

"It is for her, no tout, dat you nekleet de Chaimper," put in the Baron de Nucingen.

"Ah! a man could not set foot in the house of a more dangerous woman," the Marquis d'Esgrignon exclaimed, lowering his voice. "My disgraceful marriage is entirely owing to her."

"Dangerous?" repeated Mme. d'Espard. "You must not say such things of my best friend. Anything that I have ever heard or seen of the princess seemed to me to be prompted by the highest motives."

"Pray, let the marquis say his say," said Rastignac. "When a man has been thrown by a mettled horse, he will pick faults in the animal and sell it."

The Marquis d'Esgrignon was nettled by the speech. He looked across at Daniel d'Arthez.

"Monsieur is not on such terms with the princess that we may not speak of her, I hope?"

D'Arthez was silent; and d'Esgrignon, who did not lack wit, retorted on Rastignac with an apologetic portrait of Mme. de Cadignan. His sketch set the table in good-humor; but as d'Arthez was absolutely in the dark, he bent over to Mme. de Montcornet and asked her to explain the joke.

"Well, judging by the good opinion that you have of the princess, you are an exception; but all the other guests, it would seem, have been in her good graces."

"I can assure you that that view is totally false," returned Daniel.

"Yet here is Monsieur d'Esgrignon, of a noble Perche family, who was utterly ruined for her twelve years ago, and all but went to the scaffold beside."

"I know about it," said d'Arthez. "Madame de Cadignan rescued Monsieur d'Esgrignon from the Assize Court, and this is how he shows his gratitude to-day."

Mme. de Montcornet stared at d'Arthez; she looked almost

dazed with astonishment and curiosity. Then she glanced at Mme. d'Espard, as who should say: "He is bewitched!"

During this short conversation Mme. d'Espard had defended her friend; but her defense, after the manner of a lightning conductor, had drawn down the tempest. When d'Arthez gave his attention to the general conversation, Maxime de Trailles brought out his epigram.

"In Diane's case, depravity is not the effect but the cause; perhaps her exquisite naturalness is due to this; she does not try after studied effects; she invents nothing. She brings you out the most subtle refinements as the sudden inspiration of the most artless love; and you cannot help believing her too."

The phrase might have been prepared for a man of d'Arthez's calibre; it came out with such effect that it was like a conclusion. Nobody said any more of the princess; she seemed to be disposed of. But d'Arthez looked first at de Trailles and then at d'Esgrignon, with a sarcastic expression.

"She took a leaf out of a man's book, that has been her greatest mistake," he said. "Like a man, she squanders marriage jewels, she sends her lovers to the money-lenders, she ruins orphans, she devours dowries, she melts down old castles, she inspires crimes—and perhaps commits them herself—but——"

Never in their lives had either of the two personages addressed heard language so much to the purpose. When d'Arthez came to a pause on that *but*, the whole table was dumfounded; the spectators sat, fork in hand, looking from the intrepid man of letters to the princess' treacherous enemies. There was an awful pause; they waited to see what would come next.

"*But*," pursued d'Arthez, with satirical flippancy, "Madame de Cadignan has this one advantage over men: If any one risks himself for her, she comes to the rescue, and speaks no

ill of any man afterward. Why should not one woman, among so many, amuse herself with men, as men play with women? Why should not the fair sex take a turn at that game from time to time?——”

“Genius is more than a match for cleverness,” said Blondet, addressing Nathan.

And, indeed, d’Arthez’s avalanche of epigrams was like a reply from a battery to a discharge of musketry. They hastened to change the subject. Neither the Comte de Trailles nor the Marquis d’Esgrignon felt disposed to try conclusions with d’Arthez. When coffee was served, Blondet and Nathan went over to him with an alacrity which no one cared to imitate, so difficult was it to reconcile admiration of his behavior with the fear of making two powerful enemies.

“We knew before to-day that your character is as great as your talent,” said Blondet. “You bore yourself just now not like a man, but rather as a god. Not to be carried away by one’s feelings or imagination, not to blunder into taking up arms in the defense of the woman one loves (as people expected you to do), a blunder which would have meant a triumph for these people, for they are consumed with jealousy of celebrated men of letters—ah! permit me to say that this is the supreme height of statecraft in private life.”

“You are a statesman,” added Nathan. “It is as clever as it is difficult to avenge a woman without defending her.”

“The princess is one of the heroines of the Legitimist party,” d’Arthez returned coolly; “surely it is the duty of every gentleman to champion her on those grounds? Her services to the cause would excuse the most reckless life.”

“He will not show his hand,” said Nathan to Blondet.

“Just as if the princess were worth the trouble,” added Rastignac, as he joined the group.

D’Arthez went to the princess. She was waiting for him in an agony of anxiety. She had authorized an experiment

which might prove fatal. For the first time in her life she suffered at heart, and a perspiration broke out over her. Others would tell d'Arthez the truth, she had told him lies; if he should believe the truth, she did not know what she should do; for a character so noble, a man so complete, a soul so pure, a conscience so ingenuous, had never passed through her hands before. It was because she longed to know a true love that she had woven such a tissue of cruel lies. She felt that poignant love in her heart, she loved d'Arthez, and she was condemned to deceive him, for him she must always be the sublime actress who had played this comedy for his benefit. She heard d'Arthez's step in the dining-room with a great agitation; a shock quivered through the very springs of existence. Then she knew that her happiness was at stake; she had never felt such emotion before, yet hers had been a most adventurous life for a woman of her rank. With eyes gazing into space, she saw d'Arthez in one complete vision, saw through the outward form into his inmost soul. Suspicion had not so much as brushed him with her bat's wing! The reaction set in after the terrible throes of fear, and joy almost overcame Diane; for every creature is stronger to bear pain than to stand the extreme of happiness.

"Daniel!" she cried, rising to her feet and holding out her arms, "I have been slandered, and you have avenged me."

Daniel was utterly astounded by the words, for the roots of them lay far down out of his sight. He felt two beautiful hands clasp his face, and the princess kissed him reverently on the forehead.

"How did you know?——"

"Oh, illustrious simpleton! do you not see that I love you madly?"

From that day there was no more question of the *Princesse de Cadignan* or of d'Arthez. The princess has since inherited some property from her mother; she spends her summers with the great man of letters in a villa at Geneva, returning to

Paris for a few months during the winter. D'Arthez only shows himself at the Chamber. What is still more significant, he very rarely publishes anything.

Is this the catastrophe of the story? Yes, for those that can understand, but not for people who must have everything told.

LES JARDIES, *June*, 1839.



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